



Borthwick Institute for Archives

Archives Development Policy



This policy sets out how we develop our archive holdings, including what we collect, how we make decisions on what we collect and the terms on which we collect archives.

1 Policy

What we collect

1.1 The Borthwick was founded before the University of York and before the network of UK archive repositories was established. As a result we have acquired a great variety of archives through direct approach from their owners, and through archive rescue operations since our establishment in 1953.

1.2 The Borthwick

- cares for the University's archive
- continues to serve the organisations, businesses, individuals and families whose archives we hold, and to acquire archives from them
- acquires archives that have a demonstrable connection to existing holdings
- acquires archives that support current or future research or teaching in the University of York, not limited by date, geographical location, subject, origin or theme
- acquires archives in any format or media.

1.3 The Borthwick uses the University research strategy to inform and direct collecting:

<http://www.york.ac.uk/research/strategy/>

1.4 The Borthwick gives priority to collecting that fulfills the University's legal obligations, and supports the University's 7 Research Themes:

- Creativity
- Culture and Communication
- Environmental Sustainability and Resilience
- Health and Wellbeing
- Justice and Equity
- Risk, Evidence and Decision Making
- Technologies for the Future

1.5 The Borthwick works with University staff and students, professional and social networks, researchers, donors and owners to identify archives in private hands that would benefit from professional care at the Borthwick and that would fill gaps in our holdings relating to the University strategy.

The Process of Acquisition

1.6 The Borthwick's Archives Development Group decides whether to acquire an archive, using the Acquisition Criteria at 1.8 below. In making decisions, the Archives Development Group seeks to secure the most appropriate home for archives, whether at the Borthwick or elsewhere.

1.7 The Group is responsible for identifying potential for collecting activity, having regard to University strategy and the activities and interests of the University.

How acquisitions are decided

1.8 The Archives Development Group uses the following Acquisition Criteria in deciding whether to acquire archives:

- the archive's research significance in relation to the University's needs
- the archive's research significance in relation to public needs (international, national, local, and not time-dependent)
- the archive's potential to lead or influence national collecting
- evidence of actual, latent or unfulfilled research demand for this or related archives
- the relationship with the archive's owner
- the potential to realise relationship benefits
- other factors specific to the archive and the time
- the importance of cooperating and collaborating with repositories having, or wishing to acquire, archives in areas relating to the Borthwick's collecting activities
- the archive's links to, or ability to enhance, existing holdings

1.9 The Group seeks external advice when decisions are difficult or contentious. Such assistance comes from a variety of sources, including experts in the field, other repositories with experience of related archives, and stakeholders.

1.10 The Group does not use format as a criteria for acquisition decisions.

Terms of acquisition

1.11 The Borthwick

- prefers to acquire archives by gift to secure the permanent future of the archive
- accepts archives by deposit (loan), especially where a continuing organisation (such as the York Diocese or the York NHS) is not able to transfer the ownership of their archive
- buys, or obtains funding support to buy, archives when this is the only way to secure them for public use
- expects that the owner's intellectual property rights in the archive will be assigned or licensed to the University
- makes a specific agreement between the owner and the Borthwick on behalf of the University for each archive acquired
- explains any charges for archive services at the point of acquisition and reserves the right to charge for such services at any point while an archive is in the Borthwick's care
- works with donors and depositors to achieve the most cost-effective solution for the long-term stewardship of the archive
- adheres to the conditions required by funders in the case of archives acquired through grant aid

1.12 Where public access to the whole or part of an archive is restricted by law or the owner, we may require the owner to work within an agreed records management framework before the Borthwick accepts records for permanent preservation.

1.13 Where the whole or part of an archive is in a format for which, at the time of acquisition, the Borthwick cannot provide appropriate preservation standards we will work with the donor or depositor to mitigate the effects of inappropriate storage. Such measures may include the sub-deposit of records in a specialist archive, with agreement with the donor or depositor.

Transfer of records to the Borthwick from elsewhere in the University

1.14 Guidance for the transfer of University records is given at

<https://www.york.ac.uk/records-management/records/policy/>

1.15 The collection and preservation of data supporting university research is governed by the UK Research Councils, which require research data to be preserved for re-use. Each Research Council has its own policy on research data and the University of York undertakes to follow the relevant policies and guidance. The University's Research Data Management Policy, and associated guidance and plans to ensure that research data are kept and disposed of properly and responsibly, is here:

<http://www.york.ac.uk/about/departments/support-and-admin/information-services/information-policy/index/research-data-management-policy/>

Where appropriate, these data are managed by the Borthwick's digital archive.

Processing acquisitions

1.16 All acquisitions need to be assessed to ensure that they contain records of enduring value. Sometimes it is clear at their acquisition that some records do not have enduring value, and sometimes this becomes clear at a future date. The Borthwick's Appraisal Policy explains the

principles underpinning the allocation of archive status to new acquisitions.

1.17 The Archive Development Group manages the process of Appraisal. Appraisal identifies records of permanent significance, and implies disposal of records.

1.18 Appraisal requires skill, knowledge, experience and time, and may require holding decisions (such as a decision to review the status of records in an archive after a specified period) as well as immediate disposal decisions.

1.19 The Group may delegate the responsibility for appraising a particular archive to one or more members of Borthwick staff .

1.20 As a result of appraisal, records may be

- returned to their donors or depositors
- transferred to a more appropriate repository if the Group considers that records would benefit from relocation (for their preservation, access or otherwise) in consultation with the owner where applicable, always bearing in mind the importance of preserving the integrity of the archive of which the records form a part
- Securely destroyed with the consent of the owner.

1.21 Archives given to the University will not be sold.

1.22 Archives purchased by the University using solely its own funds and no longer meeting the Scope of Collecting criteria in the Archives Management Policy may be sold with the agreement of a majority of Senate and consent of University Council in order to maintain the strength and integrity of the Borthwick's holdings.

1.23 If archive owners require the return or transfer elsewhere of archives or records the Borthwick will charge the owners a fee representing the cost of storing, managing and making accessible the archive since its deposit at the Borthwick, the fee to be calculated at prevailing rates at the time of withdrawal.

1.24 The Borthwick continues to serve the organisations, businesses, individuals and families (including Public Records bodies) whose archives we hold, and to acquire archives from them. We maintain contacts with these organisations in the manner most convenient to depositor or donor concerned.

1.25 Where information about the terms of acquisition were not captured at the time of the archive's acquisition (for example in the early days of the Borthwick, or later, where material was collected by a non-archive body and subsequently transferred to the Borthwick) the Archives Development Group will review the need to establish appropriate terms and conditions on a case by case basis.

2 Scope

2.1 The policy applies to all the records in the care or custody of the Borthwick Institute for Archives

3 Oversight

3.1 The policy is managed by the Borthwick Senior Management Team.

4 Implementation

4.1 All staff in the Borthwick Institute are responsible for implementing and adhering to this policy.

4.2 This policy is supported by the following policies and guidelines:

- Borthwick Institute policy and terms definitions guide
- Forward plan
- Access plan and procedures
- Digitisation policy, plan and procedures
- Collections care and conservation policy, plan and procedures
- Preservation and conservation procedures
- Digital preservation plan and procedures
- University of York Data Protection Policy
- University of York Freedom of Information Policy and Publication Scheme
- University of York Information Security Policy

Document history and status

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