



Milton Keynes City Discovery Centre

Archive & Reference Library Collections Policy

BACKGROUND

The Archive & Reference Library was one of the core reasons why the Milton Keynes City Discovery Centre (MKCDC) Charity was established and is a public access service encapsulated in Memorandum and Articles of Association of the organisation. MKCDC's primary objective is "To promote a greater appreciation and understanding of the historical, natural and built environments of Milton Keynes" and the archive underpins this.

1. Purpose of the policy

1.1 To outline the scope of the collections and methods for their acquisition and disposal by the Archive & Reference Library of MKCDC.

1.2 To inform the operations and other policies of MKCDC.

1.3 To inform joint working with other heritage and archival organisations and partners in the greater Milton Keynes area.

2. Mission Statement

The repository primarily serves the citizens of Milton Keynes, as well as national and international researchers and professionals.

The purposes of the repository are:-

- to collect and make available information about the historical, natural and built environments of Milton Keynes, its history as a settlement and development as a New Town, covering Milton Keynes Unitary area and related sub-regions.
- to follow best practice to preserve, conserve and maintain the collections.
- to create access for the citizens of Milton Keynes, scholars, academics and professionals.
- to encourage use by the various stakeholders.
- to support the educational and outreach work of MKCDC.

3. Acquisition Responsibility

The Archivist is responsible for acquiring records and library material for MKCDC from external individuals and organisations. This in consultation with the Director and following the organisational strategies set by the Board of Trustees.

4. Definition of Terms

"The Archive" refers to collections of unique records created by an individual or organisation that are deemed worthy of permanent preservation and held as an identified collection in the repository.

“The Reference Library” refers to publications, including, but not limited to, books and periodicals not part of an archive collection.

“Milton Keynes Unitary area and related sub-regions” refers to the original designated area of Milton Keynes New Town, subsequent expansion into the Milton Keynes Unitary Authority and the area that it serves as a regional centre and city.

5 Description of Collections

5.1 The Archive currently contains:

- Artefacts – archaeological finds, architectural models from the new city development and objects from inherited collections relating to the development of Milton Keynes.
- Archive collections of those involved in the development of the new city in the areas of planning, architecture, art, journalism and the history of Milton Keynes.
- Maps, plans and photographs showing the development of Milton Keynes and its sub-region from the late 19th century onwards.

5.2 The Reference Library currently contains:

- Books, periodicals, ephemera and other publications relating to urban planning, sustainable development, national and international new towns, the development of Milton Keynes and subjects covered by MKCDC’s educational services including: local history, general history, geography, architecture and environment.

6. Scope of Acquisitions

6.1 Archive

- 5.1.1 Records and material relating to the development of settlements in Milton Keynes Unitary area and related sub-regions.
- 5.1.2 Records and material on the planning and development of the “New City” of Milton Keynes.
- 5.1.3 Photographic and audio-visual records of the urban development of Milton Keynes and its sub-region.
- 5.1.4 Maps and plans of the urban development of Milton Keynes and its sub-region.
- 5.1.5 2D and 3D architectural models.
- 5.1.6 Pieces of art related to the design, promotion and recording of Milton Keynes “New Town”.

6.2 Library

- 5.2.1 Books and other published material on the planning, development, history and heritage of Milton Keynes and its sub-region.
- 5.2.2 Books and other published material relating to urban planning, urbanism, sustainable development and national and international new towns.
- 5.2.3 Books and other published material relating to the subjects covered by MKCDC educational services: architecture, history, natural environment, transport and geography.

6.3 Gaps and Focus

- A number of contributing factors have led to the Archive & Reference Library suffering from a gap in material from around the turn of the 21st century. The last five years have focused on the appraisal and rationalisation of the collections, and on setting up structure and procedure for making them accessible.
- Collecting focus will be on contemporary collecting of materials relating to the development of Milton Keynes in the past 20 years and current development.

- Focus will also still be on the de-accessioning and disposal of material identified as outside the scope of this collections policy.

6.4 Outside Scope

- Objects and pieces of art; offers of artefacts and artworks will be referred to the Director and Board for consideration.
- Records identified as public records under the Public Records Act 1958; offers of potential public records will be referred to the appropriate designated place of deposit.
- Records without clear and valid title.
- Records that will not be publicly accessible for an indefinite amount of time.

7. Methods of Acquisition

Material will be acquired by gift, purchase or loan.

7.1 Gift

Donors of archive material will be required to read and agree to the Terms of Deposit after negotiation with the Archivist. Donors of library material should read the Library Donations Policy.

7.2 Purchase

The repository may purchase materials if the necessary funds are available and other methods of acquisition are not available.

7.3 Loan

Acquisitions by loan are discouraged and will only be accepted in special circumstances, for example if the depositor can make a financial contribution, or if re-negotiation on status is agreed for a period of years in the future.

Depositors will be required to read and agree to the Terms of Deposit after negotiation with the Archivist.

8. Disposal

The De-accessioning and Disposal Policy sets out in full the principles for disposal of material from the Archive & Reference Library.

8.1 While there is a strong presumption against disposal, it is recognised that disposal forms an important part of collections management. Every disposal must clearly demonstrate that there is a long-term stakeholder and organisational benefit.

8.2 Every item or group of items (where applicable) will be assessed against criteria developed by the Charity. In summary the criteria cover:

- Uniqueness
- Significance (academic and archival)
- Associated information/provenance
- Display potential
- Completeness and condition
- Number of identical items held

8.3 Items or groups of items identified for disposal will first be offered back to the donor (where known), before being offered to other appropriate archive institutions, museums or heritage organisations. Private sales will be a last resort.

8.4 All disposals have to be agreed and signed off by the Director.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibility for acquisition rests with the Archivist. This in consultation with the Director and following the organisational strategies set by the Board of Trustees, especially if there is a conflict of interest with the organisational collections policy or that of any other local institution.

10. Conflict of Interest Guidelines

The archive, in discussion with the Director and the Board, will take due account of the collecting policies of other archives, libraries and museums collecting in the same or related areas or subject fields and will consult with such organisations where conflicts of interest may arise or to define areas of specialisms, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources. Specific reference is made to the Milton Keynes Council Local Studies, the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies and the following museums and archives within the Heritage MK:

- Milton Keynes Museum
- Living Archive
- The Cowper and Newton Museum
- Bletchley Park Trust

11. Distribution of Policy

This policy will be available internally as a document that contributes to the repository's Collections Management Policy.

The policy will be available externally via the MKCDC web site in order to provide information about the materials the repository collects.

12. Approval of Policy

- approved by Director and Board of Trustees
- 15th January 2020

13. Review

This policy will be reviewed every five years. The date for the next review is October 2024.