

St Catherine's College Archive Collection Development and Acquisition Policy

1. Introduction

St Catherine's College Archives in Oxford is within the Library, an architecturally brave building, where students can reflect and think in its beautiful spaces, as much as they can be social and academically adventurous. It actively contributes to the atmosphere of openness and friendliness that greatly affirms the College's primary mission:

The pursuit of academic excellence, the enhancement of creative thinking, learning, education and research in the arts and sciences in equal part.

It treasures the traditional values of Oxford college life, but its modern architecture gives it a distinctive ability to pursue a modern agenda. The motto, *Nova et Vetera* (the new and the old), reflects this.

2. Aim

To provide a clear statement on taking new records into the St Catherine's College Archive and on its statutory/legal position.

3. Statement of Purpose

Despite its modern foundation, St. Catherine's College has an important Archive. The role of the College Archives is to preserve a record of the life of the College – both an institutional record, and a less formal picture of the life of the College community.

The Archive, based in the Library North seminar room, contains a small number of records relating to the Delegacy and a larger number relating to the foundation of the College, in addition to administrative records. The Archive primarily collects material relating to students, events in College, and commentary on College architecture.

The principal objective of the Archive is to collect, preserve, and promote the use of records documenting the history of the College. This includes records of its administration and finances, land and property ownership, and individual members of College. It aims to support the College's educational, cultural, and charitable objectives, and to be a repository of evidence and information valuable to professional and private researchers alike.

The Archive is looked after by Barbara Costa, College Archivist and Librarian.

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4. Statutory Position

The Archive:

1. Is known as the St Catherine's College Archive or Archives, located at St Catherine's College, Oxford, OX1 3UJ.
2. Reports to the Archive Committee.
3. Seeks to abide by all current archive guidance, standards, and legislation, including Freedom of Information and data protection laws.

5. Scope of Collection

The College Archive primarily contains material relating to the College's foundation in the early 1960s, including a large collection of drawings (blueprints) by the Architect Arne Jacobsen and other architectural firms which contributed to the extension of the original layout. They also contain recent and historic material dating back to the 1868 as St. Catherine's evolved from what was originally the Non-Collegiate or Unattached Students' Delegacy, to the later St. Catherine's Society, from 1930. Held by the Bodleian, the Delegacy material was transferred to the College in the 1990s/2000s.

6. History of the Archive

The College Archive was created in the 1980s marking the dawn of awareness of the value of preserving historical accounts of the life of a college with a distinct character from other colleges in Oxford.

"The Master (Patrick Nairne), Lord Bullock (1962-1981), Mr Davies (Law Fellow), Dr Dickinson and the Registrar met, as an *ad hoc* committee, in the Governing Body room on 3 February 1983 in order to review progress in creating the College Archives".

During this meeting various points were discussed and the categories of the Archives were determined:

- Material relating to the foundation of the College, from 1957 to 1964/65, which now constitute the bulk of the Archives
- Material relating to the operation and management of the College from its foundation.

The material related to the Delegacy of Unattached students, previously held by the Bodleian Library, was transferred to the College to be stored and preserved in the years around 2000.

The criteria which emerged from these conversations were, as from the original correspondence:

- "Space restrictions should prevent the Archive from becoming a "chronic harbourer of paper".
- Preservation should be for historical reasons.
- Preservation should be a contribution to administrative precedents and guidance".

The first person to be employed as an assistant in building up the Archive was a postgraduate student of St Antony's College, Stephen Ashley, in 1983. He was allowed to use the College's word processor to assist with the completion of his thesis at no financial charge. He also received remuneration of £4 per hour while working in the Archive. From 1988 the College has appointed an Archivist. 1988-1998: Stanley Gillam (alumnus, 1936); 1998-2012: Margaret Davies, alongside her husband, Derek Davies, Founding Fellow of the College; 2013-2015 and 2015-present, respectively, Assistant librarians with Archives duties and Barbara Costa: Librarian and College Archivists.

Margaret Davies in particular was responsible for the formal creation of the Archives, after years of discussion and hard work. A major contribution was her consultation of other institutions, in particular the Bodleian Library conservation team, and she adopted the not appealing but conservation-friendly grey conservation boxes, a good way of storing, classifying and preserving archival material.

She wrote with her husband Derek Davies the book about the transformation of St Catherine's Society into St Catherine's College, *Creating St Catherine's College*.

7. Conditions of Deposit

The College Archive will act as a place of final deposit, and designated archives will be retained permanently.

7.1. The Archive will accept:

- Records regardless of date.
- Records in manuscript, printed, or digital format.
- Maps, plans, drawings, engravings, and photographic images; audio-visual and computer media.
- Printed newsletters, magazines, and other publications.
- Ephemera, including posters, menu cards, postcards, etc.
- Three-dimensional artefacts only if they relate to associated records. Copies and transcripts are only acquired where the originals are not available and the material is of sufficient importance to our collections. Records will be retained in their original formats, to include born-digital records. Copies of dual or multiple format records will be retained in each format. Where feasible, digital copies of audio-visual material in obsolete formats will be made and retained in a digital archive.

7.2. The Archive will not accept:

- Material relating to individual members of the College unless it is of significance to the College's history and life.
- Material of local interest but not directly relevant to the College history and life. If refusing the offer of a collection which falls outside the scope of this policy, the College will seek to refer the individual to a more suitable repository.

8. Methods of Acquisition

8.1. Internal acquisitions:

- Institutional records will be transferred by arrangement with College departments. Only records judged to have an historical, administrative, legal, and financial or research value will be transferred for permanent retention.
- Records management schedules will be drawn up and agreed with College departments, specifying disposal arrangements for records no longer required for current business, and identifying key records of continuing historical value and worthy of permanent retention.

8.2. External acquisitions:

- Records from external sources will be acquired as donations (gifts) where possible, providing the College with clear and valid title of ownership (see document attached)
- Conditional deposits (deposits) will only be accepted in accordance with written agreement on terms of deposit and conditions for access and disposal.
- Purchases will only be made for records of outstanding importance to the College.
- Donors' wishes on the confidentiality and copyright status of material will be agreed in advance. Acquisitions will be appraised at the point of accession, and during cataloguing, which may result in recommendations for disposal of some material. Disposals will be agreed with the depositor and approved by the Archivist and the Archive Committee.

9. Accession Procedures

- No records will be accepted into the Archive without the approval of the Archivist.
- Internal transfer procedures will be agreed with College departments and periodic transfers will be arranged in accordance with agreed departmental retention schedules.

- Ad hoc offers of records to the Archives will be appraised to confirm that the records fall within the scope of this policy and do not duplicate existing holdings.
- All new acquisitions will be logged, and written agreement of terms of deposit and conditions for access and disposal issued with receipts for the records.
- Details of the depositor's name and address will be kept on file, and used by authorised College staff to identify ownership and actions that may be taken regarding the material deposited.

10. Preservation

- Records will be stored in secure conditions, conforming as far as possible to recognised archival standards.
- Records may be photographed or copied for preservation purposes, if appropriate.
- Records may be marked in pencil with a catalogue reference number, if necessary.
- Professional conservation work may be carried out on the records.
- The College may withhold access to documents that, in the opinion of Archive staff, are too fragile to be handled.

11. Access

- Records will be accepted into the Archive in the expectation that they will be available for bona fide research in accordance with Archive access policies and statutory requirements, including data protection and freedom of information legislation.
- Specific closed periods may be negotiated for particular records, but no permanently closed material will be accepted.
- All records may be used in talks and exhibitions by College staff subject to agreed closure periods.
- Records will be sorted, catalogued, and indexed in due course. No personal details of the depositor will be made available unless requested.

12. Review

The collection development policy will be reviewed by the Archivist, in consultation with the Archives Sub-committee, every 5 years or sooner if the need arises. The next review is due in October 2028. Copies of the current Policy will be made available on the Archive's web page to members of the College and other interested parties.

Barbara Costa
October 2023