

Lambeth Archives: Options Appraisal

Presentation to Lambeth Stakeholder Group

24 July 2017

Creative Cultures

Presentation Summary

- Brief outline of:
 - Lambeth's brief
 - Present position of Lambeth Archives
 - Audience: user needs and demands
 - The consultation process
 - Opportunities for Lambeth Archives
- In more detail:
 - Location criteria including special factors
 - Location options
 - Summary of our recommendations

Lambeth Archives: collections and service

- Large and historically significant collections telling the history of the borough and its people
- Reputation for innovation and contemporary collecting
- Good record of partnership working, eg Lambeth Heritage Festival
- Current location inhibits service development
- Limited online access to collections

Lambeth Archives: present location and storage

- Minet Library
 - Shared building with public library
 - Residential location poorly serviced by public transport
 - Lacks facilities for visitors: no public toilets, no exhibition or community space
 - Does not meet national archive storage standards
 - Almost at capacity for storing archives

Audiences: user needs and demand

- Usage is lower than the London average, although the collections are larger than most
- High proportion of visitors from SE5 and SW9 postcodes
- Clear that location impedes access
- A central , accessible location would attract a more diverse audience

The consultation process – and outcomes

- Public survey, group discussions with stakeholders and staff, meetings with key individuals
- Key messages:
 - Much loved and valued service
 - State of the building and location are key concerns
 - Online presence is important
 - A more accessible location would raise the profile of the service
 - Preferable locations:
 - Minet Library
 - Brixton town centre
 - Waterloo

The Brief: developing an archives for the 21st century

- Provide a more accessible community building for all
- Provide improved access and exhibition space
- Provide a destination and educational space for people to discover and learn about local heritage and identity
- Enables increased work with Lambeth's communities and partners
- Explores ways to increase revenue
- Improves the standard of physical collection storage
- Provide capacity to store and access digital records

Development opportunities and potential partnerships

- Opportunities included:
 - Other London boroughs and London Metropolitan Archives (LMA)
 - The London Archive Partnership (LAP)
 - Locally based heritage bodies: Lambeth Palace & BCA
 - Lambeth Library and other council services

Location assessment: criteria

- Physical requirements
 - Archive repository
 - Public facilities
- Location
- Costs
 - Capital and one off costs
 - Revenue
 - Split sites and offsite storage
 - Opportunities for income

Minet Library

- Refurbishment or redevelopment?
- Capacity
- Poor location
- Costs – low for refurbishment, higher for redevelopment
- If selected as an option, collections would have to be housed elsewhere during development period

Somerleyton Road development

- Two models considered:
 - Ovalhouse alone
 - Ovalhouse and Carlton Mansions
- Capacity
- Good location
- Costs
 - Capital broadly in line with other options
 - Revenue costs very high

Kennington Lane sites

- Two sites available
 - The Redfern Centre
 - 301 – 303 Kennington Lane
- Six options considered
- Capacity
- Good location
- Costs
 - Considerable variation between different options
 - Revenue costs higher for a split site
- Implications of a split site

Other options considered

- Gracefield Gardens
 - A temporary option
- The OAKDA development
 - A possibility for the future
- The Keybridge Development
 - Now not available
- The 'do nothing' option

Our findings

- No viable partnerships with other London boroughs or LMA at present
- LAP plans for improved London-wide online catalogue & TNA plans for A2A data would both benefit Lambeth
- Neither Lambeth Palace or BCA co-location possible
- Lambeth Archives should seek accreditation
- Lambeth Archives has a key role in managing council records and in digital preservation
- Lambeth Archives needs an audience development plan
- Lambeth Archives needs a comprehensive online catalogue
- Volunteers can play a greater role at Lambeth Archives

Recommendations

- Location: Town centre with good transport links
- External funding bid to support community engagement
- Potential sites: avoid split site. Most suitable is Kennington Lane next to Redfearn Centre or at Ovalhouse
- Service development strategy needed to include
 - Income generation
 - Partnership working and education and outreach
 - Increased online presence
 - Role as record keeper for Lambeth
 - Marketing and promotion
 - Achieving accreditation

Recommendations

- Visibility: pilot work to promote the service now and big annual event to be Lambeth Heritage Day
- Volunteering to help increase capacity
- Improve access through new integral online catalogue
- Improve income generation
- Records management: temporary staff member and involvement in Document Project group
- Budget: planning for new building costs and service development

Discussion and questions

Lambeth Council officers

Creative Cultures team

Lambeth Archives staff