

## COMMUNITY ACCESS TO ARCHIVE OFFICES

Thank you for taking the time to look at this questionnaire, which is part of an English Heritage project titled **Expanding the Neighbourhood Plan Evidence Base**.

### **The Questionnaire**

The questionnaire is structured into 3 sections. **Please complete multiple choice questions using the letter 'x'**. Each question has a short explanatory sentence indicating whether one or multiple boxes should be checked. For free text questions we welcome as much concise detail as you can supply. We would be grateful if you could avoid the use of 'jargon' in your replies. A brief glossary of terms is included in a separate document to help in the interpretation of some questions.

We hope you'll find everything straightforward. We've attached some explanatory notes about the questionnaire, which we hope will enable you to complete the questionnaire as fully as possible. However if you do have any problems please don't hesitate to give us a call on the numbers below, and we'll gladly talk things through. Thank you again for sharing your information with us.

### **Submitting the Questionnaire**

Completed questionnaires can be emailed to [answers@locusconsulting.co.uk](mailto:answers@locusconsulting.co.uk). Or, if you prefer, they can be printed off and sent in the post to:

Archive Questionnaire  
Locus Consulting  
Park Lane House  
5 Park Lane,  
Donington  
Lincolnshire  
PE11 4UE

**PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR  
QUESTIONNAIRE NO LATER  
THAN THE**

**15<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2013**

### **CONTACTING US**

Please do not hesitate to contact us using the information below if you require any assistance or advice on filling in the questionnaire.

<b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:adam.partington@locusconsulting.co.uk">adam.partington@locusconsulting.co.uk</a> <a href="mailto:alastair.macintosh@locusconsulting.co.uk">alastair.macintosh@locusconsulting.co.uk</a>	<b>Telephone:</b> 01775 821402 07882109149 (Adam) or 07557375400 (Alastair)
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PLEASE PROVIDE US WITH YOUR CONTACT DETAILS:

<b>Organisation:</b> Brent Council	<b>Position:</b> Brent Archives
<b>Date:</b> 11/3/2013	<b>Email:</b>
<b>Author:</b>	<b>Telephone:</b>

## SECTION 1: AVAILABILITY

This section aims to find out about the types and formats of heritage information that you hold and how that information is made available to a member of the public. The format of the questionnaire is multiple choice. Please check one or more boxes for each question where relevant.

**This first section comprises 3 questions and is completed on the chart on the following page:**

<b>1: HELD</b>	<b>Question:</b> <i>Do you hold this type of information?</i> <b>Response:</b> Yes <u>or</u> No <b>Aim:</b> To find out the types of heritage information held within your archive.
<b>2: ACCESS</b>	<b>Question:</b> How can information be accessed? <b>Response:</b> Mark <u>one or more</u> boxes <b>Aim:</b> To understand if and how members of the public can physically access the information.
<b>3: FORMAT</b>	<b>Question:</b> What formats is information held in? <b>Response:</b> Mark <u>one or more</u> boxes <b>Aim:</b> To understand the different formats that heritage information is held in.



## **SECTION 2: ACCESSIBILITY**

As well as finding out the types of information held by your archive, we are interested to know the ways in which it is being made available to the public. This section is divided into three parts, investigating online access to holdings, remote enquiries and requests for research, and physical access by a member of the public.

### **> ONLINE**

A growing number of archives are providing information online, including via third party websites (e.g. findmypast, ancestry). The styles of website vary considerably, particularly according to the information displayed, the different structures in which information is held, and the resources available. The questions below seek to understand the different types of heritage information held online and the often individual ways in which it is presented and structured.

**If none of your heritage information is available online please go to Question 2.6**

**2.1 How is heritage information hosted online?** (Mark either 'Yes' or 'No'. Please add the address of your website in the appropriate box.)

TYPE OF SITE	Yes	No	Website address:
Third party website			
Local authority web pages	x		www.brent.gov.uk/archives
Bespoke site or sub-site			
Mobile phone site			
Mobile phone app			(name)

**2.2 Approximately when did your online service become available to the public?** (Month/Year)

\*Answer c.2001-2002

**2.3 Can users upload information to your website?**

**NO** (Delete as applicable)**2.4 If 'YES' what types of information, and can users see each other's contributions?** (Free text answer)

**Answer:**

Yes, but only by agreement, e.g. research articles, pdfs.

## > REMOTE ENQUIRY

Remote enquiries are a common way of providing heritage information. This section seeks to understand what protocols are in place to supply information remotely and the different methods in which it is made available.

**2.5 Do you provide a remote search/enquiry service? YES**

**2.6 What material and/or data can be supplied remotely for each heritage information type (free text), and in what format can this be provided? (Multiple choice)**  
(e.g. Holdings list, copy of specific document, publication)

	Material/data/information	FORMAT			
		Photocopy	Printout	Scan/Photo	Other*
Maps		X		X	
Lists & Registers		X		X	
Records					
Wills & Probate		X		X	
Plans		X		X	
Images & Media			X	X	

\*Please give details if 'Other'

## > VISIT

It is likely that the most effective way of accessing the information held by an archive is to visit it in person. For the user, this represents an opportunity to tap into the knowledge and experience of archive staff. This part of the questionnaire aims to find out what heritage information is accessible through a visit, along with the practices, facilities and resources available to help access archive holdings.

### 2.7 What are the opening arrangements of your archive? (Please include days, times and any access restrictions in operation) (Free text).

Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Saturdays 9am-5pm and Thursdays 1-8pm. We require notice of a day or so for material held in the main archives store in an adjacent building (and for lengthy sessions on the microfilm readers, as there are only two of them). This building is where our interim service would be based if redevelopment is permitted and there will be much greater restrictions on access there than the service we present to the public now, where we can respond to people turning up without any communication and still retrieve essential documents for them.

### 2.8 What facilities are available to members of the public visiting your Archive? (Mark either 'Yes' or 'No')

FACILITY	Yes	No
Dedicated workspace	x	
Computer with catalogue access	x	
Computer with internet access	x	
Library/search room	x	
Other*		

\*Please provide more information here

The work table in our search room accommodates 8 people at most and 2 more each at microfilm readers and computers. This is likely to be severely reduced when we move to interim accommodation during a redevelopment of our host library centre in 2013-14.

### 2.9 Can you provide visitors with assistance in any of the following areas? (Mark one or more boxes)

	Computer/IT skills	Officers' local knowledge	Manual searching	Interpreting information	Other*
Maps		x	x	x	
Lists and Registers		x	x	x	
Records	x	x	x	x	
Wills and Probate				x	
Plans		x	x	x	
Images	x	x	x	x	

\*Please provide more information here

We can search for as yet un-digitised images and make these available, e.g. for people to purchase the images. We also offer technical assistance with use of microfilm readers and deciphering of handwriting in transcripts, original documents and on census microfiche. We are also able to find images from a system of numbered negatives and a newspaper photographer's diary.

**2.10 How can information be viewed by a member of the public? (Mark one or more boxes)**

	Original Document	Photocopy	Microfiche /Microfilm	Digital image	Transcription or Translation	Other*
Maps	x	x				
Lists and Registers	x					
Records	x	x	x	x	x	
Wills and Probate	x	x			x	x
Plans	x	x	x			
Images						

\*Please provide more information here

There are index cards to planning material and cards for some individual properties arranged by road in alphabetical drawers .

**2.11 What criteria can visitors use to search information? Does this require staff assistance?**

	Geographical location search	Topic/type criteria search	Requires staff assistance?
Maps	x		x
Lists & Registers	x		x
Records			
Wills & Probate			
Plans	x		x
Images & Media	x		x

Most people require support to follow an index or when using records in unfamiliar format.

**2.12 Bearing in mind your answer to Question 2.6, what additional material and/or data can be supplied or accessed during a visit (free text), and in what format can this be provided? (Multiple choice)**

(e.g. Photocopy, digital image, transcription, report)

	Material/data/information	FORMAT			
		Photocopy	Printout	Scan/Photo	Other
Maps		X			
Lists & Registers		X			
Records		X	X	X	
Wills & Probate		X		X	
Plans		X	X	X	
Images & Media		X	X	X	

It would depend on the type and condition of the document whether a scan or photocopy could be provided.



## **SECTION 3: ENABLING ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND APPLICATION**

Much of the information held by archives is in a raw form (e.g. original documents and maps). This section aims to find out what processes and resources are in place to assist a member of the public in the interpretation and application of information acquired from an archive office.

### **3.1 Please give details of any methods and materials available to help users in the interpretation of heritage information, such as user guides to your archive. (Free text)**

**Answer:**  
**We can supply copies of finding aids in advance. We have various subject guides on the different local studies topics to which we would normally cater, such as family history, local history, school history and also for the commonest, frequently used resources such as newspapers, street directories, images and illustrations and electoral registers. We are hoping to produce one on maps after further work on our holdings.**

**Users can consult our online catalogue which is available through simple and logical searching and from a link on our webpages. The catalogue combines Images and Photographs, Archive documents and Museum objects.**

### **3.2 What guidance do you have to help guide members of the public in undertaking heritage-related projects in your area? If you don't provide any guidance of this kind please enter "n/a". (Free text)**

(These might include guidance on how to produce village design statements, organise local history projects, or inform building restoration projects.)

<b>Historical research</b>	<b>We often give people advice on how to structure their own assignments or recommend themes, starting points etc.</b>
<b>Conservation (e.g. buildings)</b>	<b>We can put people in touch with subject-based experts or people with more legal knowledge or neutrality.</b>
<b>Architecture and design</b>	
<b>Education and outreach</b>	<b>This is done through the Brent Museum and Archives Learning Officer who provides tailored curriculum-focussed sessions for schools. This officer is in charge of a loan box service ( of historical objects) open to schools and anyone engaged in education or work with young people.</b>
<b>Planning-related matters</b>	<b>We usually conduct the searches for enquirers, looking through building registers and checking microfilms on their behalf.</b>
<b>Landscape history</b>	
<b>Other</b>	<b>We can refer members of the public to professional paid researchers or various freelancers as appropriate. We have also proof-read work after it was researched at Brent Archives and retained copies of dissertations to which we can guide subsequent enquirers.</b>

**3.3 Are you aware of any *specific* community-led plans (e.g. parish plans, village design statements, neighbourhood plans etc.) that have used information from your archive in the past 5 years?**

**Answer: YES**

**3.4 If 'YES' please give some specific details where possible (Free text)**  
(e.g. location, type of plan and basic aims)

Type of Plan	Details
Redevelopment/ regeneration	Too numerous
Campaigns for/against closure or demolitions	Ditto

**This concludes the questionnaire. Thank you for taking the time to share your information with us.**

**END**