



ARCHIVES AND HISTORIC COLLECTIONS DEPARTMENT

ACCESS POLICY

1. Aim

Hatfield House Archives and Historic Collections Department seeks to document and preserve all of the collections at Hatfield House and other houses owned by the Cecil family. We will actively collect archival material, in all formats, originating from and relating to members of the Cecil family and their estates and businesses, to preserve these records and to make them available to the family, staff and members of the public, where it is thought appropriate. Books and objects are acquired at the initiative of the family. The department then manages the documentation and care of these items, on behalf of the family.

2. Policy

2.1 Purpose and scope

The purpose of this policy is to lay out the principles for access to the Hatfield House Archives and any restrictions, and to ensure that access is managed according to the wishes of the Cecil family and the requirements of the estate businesses. The policy applies to all archives in all formats and will ensure that access is managed consistently, practically and within relevant legal frameworks.

The archives contain the manuscript collections of the Cecil Family (Marquess of Salisbury). The collections consist of the personal and political papers of members of the Cecil Family from William Cecil (Lord Burghley) to the current members, along with papers relating to their estates and business interests. The papers date from the 12th century to the present day and records relating to the current activities of the estate are still being created and added to the archives.

2.2 Use of the policy

This policy is part of a series of policies that state the principles governing the management and care of the Hatfield House Archives and historic collections. These policies, along with strategic documents, plans and procedures provide a framework for decision making, planning and prioritising as well as for managing the day to day activities of the Archives and Historic Collections Department.

Access is an important function of the Archives and we acquire and preserve material in the expectation that it will, ultimately, be used. It is essential that access to material in the archives is balanced against the preservation needs of the collection. This policy applies to everyone who accesses or requests to access the archives, including staff, academic and commercial researchers and other interested members of the public.

2.3 Standards/legal framework

- Data Protection Act 1998
- Conditional exemption of archive collections granted 11 July 2013 under the Inheritance Tax Act, 1984.

2.4 Policy statements

2.4.1 Academic/historical research

- The archives are primarily a resource for members of the Cecil family and members of staff working on the Hatfield, Dorset and London estates.
- Access is granted to the public to conditionally exempt collections under the terms of Section 31 (3) of the Inheritance Tax Act, 1984.
- Access is also granted to bona fide researchers to the rest of the archive, at Lord Salisbury's discretion, in accordance with rules for researchers. Requests for access to the archives must include a detailed explanation of which documents the researcher would like to see and for what purpose.
- External researchers may be asked for proof of identity. A letter of introduction by an academic supervisor or head of department may be requested in addition to proof of identity.
- The Archives encourages and supports academic research into our collections.

2.4.2 Commercial/legal research

- Researchers working for financial or legal benefit must declare this interest on application to view the collections.
- Access to the collections for such purposes is at the discretion of Lord Salisbury and the Estate Managers. As such, a decision of access may take longer than usual.
- A charge will be made for access to the archives for commercial purposes.

2.4.3 Internal access

- The Archives recognises the significance of the historical archive for the day to day work of the estate and associated businesses. Providing access to the archives for colleagues in other departments is a core function of the Department.
- Access should occur in the reading room where possible, or documents may be signed out and returned in accordance with the preservation policy and procedural manual.

2.4.4 Restrictions on access

- Documents that are in poor physical condition or that may be damaged by handling will not be produced.
- Un-catalogued material may not be produced.
- Permission must be sought from Lord Salisbury (via archives staff) for access to any material dating from post-1947, or from the papers of the 5th Marquess or more recent collections.
- Material deemed to be of a personal or sensitive nature will not be produced. This includes papers from conditionally exempt collections, which are closed under the terms of Section 31 (3) of the Inheritance Tax Act, 1984.

2.4.5 Finding aids

- All existing finding aids can be accessed in the archives office. It should be borne in mind that these are in differing formats and are of varying quality and ease of use.
- Catalogues and descriptions to some of the collections are available at The National Archives.
- A digitised version of the calendar to the Cecil Papers is available on-line (www.british-history.ac.uk).

- Many of the documents in the archives do not appear in a catalogue, although there is an on-going cataloguing programme to catch up with this backlog. Cataloguing and catalogue conversion is governed by the Archives Collections Information Policy.

2.4.6 Enquiry service

- Hatfield House Archives cannot undertake extensive research on behalf of the public.
- Small lookups in clearly defined sources may be possible.
- Access to staff records is not possible due to the nature of the records involved. Archives staff can undertake lookups in these sources for genealogists and local historians, providing names and dates are given and in line with the Data Protection Act 1988 (i.e. researchers must provide proof of death of the subject of the request before any information is given).

2.4.7 Remote access and reprographics

- A digitised copy of the Cecil Papers is available through subscribing universities and institutions on the Cecil Papers on-line website.
- Papers relating to the family estates in Liverpool have been deposited at the Liverpool Record Office and are available there, subject to the access arrangements for the collection, their access policy and opening arrangements.
- No other collections are available remotely at this time.
- Copies of documents may be provided to researchers. This is governed by the Archives Reprographics Policy.

2.4.8 Charges

- There is no charge for non-commercial historical research in the archives.
- The archives staff may copy documents for researchers, subject to copyright and preservation restrictions. A separate notice of charges for copying is available on request.

3. Related policies and documents

- Collections information policy
- Preservation policy
- Reprographics policy
- Procedural manual
- Information for researchers

4. Approved by Lord Salisbury (signed and dated):

5. Review date

1 October 2017