

Collections Development Policy

Background

The Planned Environment Therapy (PET) Archives and Special Collections were established in 1989 by the Planned Environment Therapy Trust (PETT) (Registered Charity 248633). The Archives were established following an acquisition of the personal papers of the residential childcare pioneer, David Wills. The Trust established a study centre at Toddington, Gloucestershire to house the new archive collection and accompanying reference library.

Over the next 30 years PETT continued to acquire collections from individuals and organisations relating to planned environment therapy, therapeutic communities and alternative education. This included the acquisition of the National Childcare Library (NCCL) from David Lane in 2004 as well as donations from those working in therapeutic and planned environment communities.

In January 2018 The Mulberry Bush Organisation (Registered Charity 309565) acquired both the Toddington site and the Archives, Special Collections and NCCL following the dissolution of PETT. The Toddington site was relaunched in July 2019 as The Mulberry Bush Third Space incorporating the Planned Environment Therapy Archives and Special Collections, and the National Childcare Library.

Mission Statement

The Mulberry Bush Organisation is a not-for-profit with a mission to provide services to meet the needs of emotionally troubled and traumatised children, young people, their families and communities.

Aims

We aim to:

- Collect preserve and disseminate the histories of therapeutic living and learning
- Meet the needs of communities by promoting lifelong learning and reflection through the use of original resources and secondary sources
- Support therapeutic approaches to trauma by facilitating research and academic enquiry

Objectives

We will:

- Acquire, preserve, catalogue and make available primary and secondary source materials of continuing evidential value
- Make the PET Archives and Special Collections and NCCL resources accessible and promote their value as an educational resource
- Preserve new and existing records for current and future use

Collecting Remit

We will seek to acquire archival and printed material, in both digital and analogue forms, concerning the following areas:

- Therapeutic communities
- Community living environments
- Enabling environments
- Planned environments

This includes, but is not limited to, collections from individuals, communities, trusts, associations and societies concerned with:

- Childcare
- Education
- Youth offending
- Adult offending
- Drug addiction treatment
- Mental health
- Social rehabilitation

Methods of Acquisition

Archival materials and printed resources may be acquired in the following ways:

Gift

Legal ownership of the materials is transferred to The Mulberry Bush Organisation.

Transfer

Direct transfer of materials from external archives, museums and special collections libraries to The Mulberry Bush Organisation.

Loan

Custody and responsibility for the records are transferred to The Mulberry Bush Organisation for a fixed term while the depositor retains legal ownership.

Please note that we will always prioritise deposits with Gift status. This includes when transferring, preserving and promoting the collections.

Purchase

Purchased by the Mulberry Bush Organisation from the owner or from a reputable dealer.

Please note that purchases will only be made in exceptional cases and for records of outstanding importance to therapeutic communities.

We will clarify ownership and provenance of collections before they are acquired. Priority will be given to collections at risk from damage or destruction.

We may seek financial contributions from owners towards the costs of preserving their collections.

Selection Criteria

We will decide what to keep by:

- Appraising what is offered to ensure that resources are used effectively to preserve records of historical importance
- Following national and international guidelines on selection of archival and printed materials
- Liaising with owners and users, including discussing options for keeping the information in communities

Archival and printed materials selected for acquisition must meet the following criteria:

- Contain significant subject matter or content relevant to our collecting remit. The pre-existence of a subject in the collections is of itself not sufficient justification for acquisition

- Have the potential to be of significant use to researchers, now or in the foreseeable future. Items of primarily bibliophilic or aesthetic value will not be acquired
- Be in a good physical condition and in the case of archive collections, be in some logical order. Potential acquisitions of any sort must not pose a significant health and safety risk or serious conservation threat to other items in the collection
- Be suitable for storage, long term preservation and use through existing archive systems and structures; this applies, for example, to objects for which we do not have suitable storage facilities and digital content that cannot be stored, migrated or accessed satisfactorily within existing resources.

It is a condition of acceptance that:

- There are no unnecessary restrictions placed on access or availability for research
- The depositor has the authority to transfer the material and sign a formal deposit agreement.

Disposal options

Where materials do not meet the collecting remit or selection criteria described above we will discuss appropriate disposal options with the depositor.

This discussion will be initiated as early as possible, preferably before physical transfer, or at the point of accessioning.

The options for unwanted material are as follows:

Return to the owner (depositor) or donor

We will ask owners to collect or arrange the return of material that does not meet the selection criteria. Owners will be advised that any material not collected within an agreed time may be disposed of as waste.

Transfer to a more appropriate archive , library or museum

We may recommend this option to the owner if the material(s) would be more appropriately held by an alternative repository, or if the material duplicates items already held. Wherever possible we expect the owner to make these arrangements.

Physically destroy

Where appropriate paper records and electronic hardware will be shredded or disposed of as confidential waste. Digital files will be deleted from the digital repository. We may require owners to contribute towards costs incurred by these processes.

Use for training, teaching or other outreach purposes

We may use unwanted non-confidential material for display, as items to handle, or for outreach with communities away from the MB3 site.

Offer items for sale

We may sell printed or published material from our collections if it duplicates our holdings or does not relate to therapeutic committees or alternative education. Any income from such sales will be applied for the benefit of the collections. We do not sell archives.

Collection Review, 2019-2022

From 2019 until the end of 2022 we will be undertaking a review of our existing holdings.

The review aims to ensure the PET Archives and Special Collections and NCCL can:

- Support the aims of The Mulberry Bush Organisation
- Effectively preserve records of historic value
- Bring the Repository inline with international standards
- Improve access to the existing collections
- Allow for future development of the collections

To achieve this, we will be undertaking retrospective appraisal of collections where evidence of previous appraisal to an approved standard is not apparent.

Appraising items and materials

Material and individual items will be reviewed against the collecting remit and selection criteria outlined above. If material does not satisfy the criteria the Archivist may take the decision to deaccession the items. The depositor or donor will be informed and asked to collect the items or arrange for the return of the material. Owners will be advised that any material not collected within an agreed time may be disposed of as waste.

Appraising collections

Where whole collections do not fall within the Collecting Policy, the depositor or donor will be contacted and, if desired, the Archivist will support the owner to find an alternative place of deposit and manage the transfer of materials.

Alternatively, the owner will be asked to collect the items or arrange for the return of the material. They will be advised that any material not collected within an agreed time may be disposed of as waste.

Reuniting collections

Where collections have been split between repositories, we will look to reunite the materials. The depositor or donor will be informed and if they are in agreement, the alternative repository will be contacted. If the collection is to be brought together at the alternative repository, the Archivist will support the owner to manage the transfer of the materials.

Contact

If you have questions please contact: archives@mulberrybush.org.uk

Reviewed on	Version	Author(s)
08/08/2019	1.0	Nicky Hilton, Senior Archivist
09/04/2020	1.1	Nicky Hilton, Senior Archivist
16/02/2021	1.2	Nicky Hilton, Senior Archivist