

# BROOKLYN NAVY | YARD

## **Collections Management Policy**

*Policy Owner: BNYDC Archivist & Records Manager*

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## 1 Introduction

The Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation (BNYDC) Archives serves as the repository for the official records of BNYDC and the historical records of the Brooklyn Navy Yard. Its primary purpose is to collect, preserve, and provide source material documenting the history of the Corporation and the site.

The Collections Management Policy establishes and documents the guidelines and procedures concerning all collections related activities including the acquisition, development, management, and use of the collections. The Collections Management Policy, hereafter referred to as the Policy, deals with all major aspects of collections stewardship, which is the careful, sound, and responsible management of that which is entrusted to the care of the BNYDC Archives, hereafter referred to as the Archives. The Archives adheres to the standards and best practices of both the Society of American Archivists and the American Alliance of Museums. The Policy is a guide for Board, Management, and staff as they perform their individual and collective duties.

## 2 Mission

BNYDC's mission is to fuel New York City's economic vitality by creating and preserving quality jobs, growing the city's modern industrial sector and its businesses, and connecting the local community with the economic opportunity and resources of the Yard. The Department of Records Management and Archives supports this mission through information management. Thus, the mission of the Archives is to document the Corporation's legacy by collecting, organizing, and preserving its records and assets. The Archives also supports the Brooklyn Navy Center at BLDG 92 by collecting, organizing, and preserving material that celebrates the history of the Brooklyn Navy Yard – past, present, and future. The Archives provides access to the material in its care to staff, as well as tenants, contractors, and other interested persons who seek to evaluate the Yard's impact on the history of Brooklyn's social, cultural, and economic development.

## 3 Scope of Collections

The bulk of the Archives' holdings consists of architectural plans from the early nineteenth century through present day. Collections also represent related to the history and development of the Yard, artifacts salvaged from the Yard, personal papers donated by individuals or families of Yard workers and Yard tenant businesses, as well as oral histories of Yard workers.

The collections fall under 4 categories:

- Corporate Records
- Manuscript Collections
- Special Collections
- Museum Collections



### 3.1 Format & Types of Materials

We collect original, unpublished materials, including personal papers and organizational records; architectural plans and maps; oral histories in both transcript and audio and video formats; photography and moving images in print, negative, and digital formats; works of art on paper; paintings; artifacts; architectural records; textiles; and printed materials and ephemera.

### 3.2 Geography

Our geographic scope of collecting is exclusively the Brooklyn Navy Yard in Brooklyn, New York. We do not collect material outside of the Yard's borders - for example, of shipbuilding or Naval activity outside the Brooklyn Navy Yard.

### 3.3 Time Period

Collections span the period from early nineteenth-century to the present day. We will continue to collect within the entirety of these time periods, both adding more modern materials and building upon our existing strengths.

### 3.4 Language

Currently, collections are primarily in English. We will continue to collect primarily in English, but will consider collections with a portion of materials in other languages as they represent the communities of workers employed at the Brooklyn Navy Yard.

### 3.5 Subject Areas

The subject areas listed below are meant as a general guide to the top collecting priorities, rather than an exhaustive list of all subjects covered in our collections.

- African Americans
- Architecture
- Design
- Engineering
- Industry
- Infrastructure
- Labor
- Manufacturing
- Ordnance & Artillery
- Passive Defense
- Ship models
- Tenants
- Tools
- Union workers
- Women



## 4 Collection Development

The Archives was designated the official repository for all non-current records of the BNYDC in 2004. The Archives will promote Corporation-wide records management and collect material in the following categories from all departments of the BNYDC, as well as outside sources.

### 4.1 Official Records, Papers, and Publications of the BNYDC

Official records encompass the records or papers generated or received by the various offices and departments of the BNYDC in the conduct of their business. These records will be managed in accordance with an approved records retention and disposition schedule.

### 4.2 Special Collections

Personal and professional papers of individuals who worked at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, or businesses who were tenants of the BNYDC, as a means of documenting the internal life and culture of the Yard, as well as the corporate legacy of BNYDC.

### 4.3 Objects on Display in the Yard's Public Spaces

Objects that were acquired by BNYDC for display in any public spaces on the site, particularly at the Brooklyn Navy Yard Center at BLDG 92 fall under the custody of the Archives and will be cared for as dictated by the Archives' policies and procedures.

## 5 Operations and Management

### 5.1 Acquisitions

#### 5.1.1 OVERVIEW

The Archives will build its collections primarily through donations. The collections are built in a focused manner, striving to reflect the legacy of the Brooklyn Navy Yard, BNYDC, and its activities.

#### 5.1.2 TERMS AND CONDITIONS GOVERNING DONATIONS

- 1) All donations to the Archives must be outright and unconditional gifts; donors may not issue restrictions on BNYDC's use of donated objects.
- 2) The Archives does not guarantee the exhibition of donated objects.
- 3) All objects to be donated must have a clean title and not be subjected to any liens or encumbrances.
- 4) Donations may be tax deductible. BNYDC will provide a receipt upon donation, but in the absence of any appraisals or other evidence of value, provided by a donor, BNYDC will not include the value of the donated object in the receipt.
- 5) Items are promptly placed in storage, but will not be made accessible until resources become available.
- 6) Objects will not be digitized unless the Archivist determines a need to do so.
- 7) Objects may be deaccessioned from the Archives based on spatial constraints and/or updated policies, in which case deaccessioned objects shall be handled as provided by the Deaccessioning Policy below.

#### 5.1.3 ACQUISITION RESTRICTIONS

BNYDC may decide whether to accept any object proposed for donation in its sole discretion. Examples of reasons for BNYDC to not accept particular objects include:



- falling outside the collection scope;
- lack of accurate and/or significant documentation;
- duplication;
- physical size;
- need for extensive conservation and/or care.

#### 5.1.4 ACQUISITION PROCESS

*Receipt of Photographs and Questionnaire:* The first step in the donation process involves furnishing the Archives with photographs of the objects you wish to donate, as well completing the Archives' donation questionnaire. Potential donors should not bring or send objects to the Archives without first having completed the questionnaire and having sent recent photographs showing the current conditions of the objects to be donated. The inventory lists the objects being offered and states clearly the physical conditions of the objects.

*Evaluation:* Archives staff will evaluate the inventory form and photographs to determine which offered objects are of interest to BNYDC. If BNYDC is interested in any of the objects proposed for donation, it will contact the donor.

Donation offers are reviewed according to the following criteria:

- consistent with the scope of the collections, as explained in the Policy;
- level of provenance or documentation;
- duplication;
- physical space required to care for, store, and exhibit;
- need for excessive care and/or conservation due to fragility or damage; and
- the potential hazard or risk to other objects in the collections and/or to people.

*Signing the Deed of Gift:* If material is deemed acceptable for acquisition by the Archives, the Archivist will (i) send a Deed of Gift by post and (ii) contact the donor and facilitate a physical transfer of material. The donor must personally deliver the objects to the Archives at which time a Deed of Gift must be signed by both the donor and the Archivist. A copy is furnished to the donor, the original is kept with the Archives. Copies of the Archives' Collection Management Policy and Policy on Access and Use are furnished to the donor. This completes the donation.

## 5.2 Deaccessioning Policy

No document or artifact shall be removed from the Archives' auspices except in conformity with the following rules:

1. A deaccession recommendation shall be prepared by the Archivist and approved by the General Counsel or Chief of Staff.
2. Any decision to deaccession will follow generally accepted archival standards. One of the following criteria must be met:
  - a. The material is not relevant to the mission of the Archives or the Brooklyn Navy Yard Center at BLDG 92.
  - b. The material has failed to retain its physical integrity or has been lost or stolen and is not expected to be recovered.



- c. The material duplicates other material in the collection of the Archives and is not necessary for research or educational purposes.
  - d. The Archives is unable to conserve the property in a responsible manner.
  - e. BNYDC in its reasonable and good faith judgement due to spatial constraints, redundancy, the overall makeup of the object in its custody, or otherwise determined it is in its best interest to deaccession the object.
3. No accepted donation shall be deaccessioned for two years after the date of its acquisition.
  4. A complete record of deaccessions shall be retained permanently.
  5. Deaccession may be accomplished by any of the following methods (i) by donation with scholarly or cultural organizations as the preferred recipients; (ii) by public sale with scholarly or cultural organizations as the preferred recipients; (iii) otherwise disposed of by BNYDC without any monetary consideration.
  6. Any proceeds derived from the deaccessioning of any property from the Archives shall fund the non-for-profit purposes of BNYDC.
  7. Materials deaccessioned shall not be privately sold.

#### 5.2.1 DEACCESSIONING PROCESS

*Review by Archives Staff:* If an object is determined to meet one or more of the criteria listed in section above, Archives staff will review the paper and electronic records for the material to confirm that all documentation is accurate and complete. Incomplete records will be completed as much as possible before proceeding. If clear and unrestricted title cannot be determined from the available paperwork, the deaccessioning process will stop.

*Documenting Deaccessioning:* All deaccessioning decisions and actions will be documented using the Archives' content management system, and all paper records will be updated. The original Deaccessioning Form will be signed by the Archivist, as well as General Counsel or Chief of Staff. This paperwork and associated files will be retained. Object identification numbers that were applied to an object when it was first accepted will not be removed during the deaccessioning process.

*Disposal of Deaccessioned Objects:* An object being deaccessioned will be disposed of according to the action recorded on the Deaccessioning Form. The following are approved methods of disposal:

1. Donation to scholarly or cultural organizations as the preferred recipients.
2. Public sale with scholarly or cultural organizations as the preferred recipients.
3. Otherwise disposed of by BNYDC without any monetary consideration.

*Restrictions for Deaccessioned Objects:* Deaccessioned objects will not be returned directly to original donors or their families or representatives. If objects are to be sold at public sales, donors may be notified of the impending sale. They may participate if they choose. Monies from public auctions will be used only fund the not-for-profit purposes of BNYDC. Consistent with industry ethical standards, BNYDC will not capitalize collections or treat them as financial assets. Objects sold at public auction may not be purchased by anyone directly associated with BNYDC, including Board members, staff, and volunteers. BNYDC representatives may not directly and/or personally gain or benefit from artifact donations, deaccessions, or dispersals.



## 6 Care and Maintenance

BNYDC shall take reasonable effort at all times to provide care and maintenance to objects in its custody according to the following guidelines:

- A stable environment for objects in storage or on display shall be maintained by protecting them from excessive light, heat, humidity and dust. The environmental needs of different materials shall be maintained in accordance with generally accepted archival standards, including secure, climate-controlled storage areas for the collections.
- Objects will be protected all materials against theft, fire, and other disasters pursuant to the applicable BNYDC policies.
- When possible, paper materials shall be reproduced digitally, photocopied on acid-free paper, or otherwise duplicated and stored in a separate location.
- When deemed necessary, conservation of materials shall be undertaken by or with the advice of a trained conservator.
- Inventories and location records shall be kept up to date to facilitate access and to prevent loss.
- Packing and transportation of objects under the care and stewardship of the Archives shall be by the safety standards established in advance by BNYDC at the point of transmittal. Objects loaned to the Archives will be transported under terms dictated by the loan agreement signed by both BNYDC and the lending institution.

## 7 Access

The BNYDC Archives may choose to make research materials in its possession available electronically, and/or may grant access to the physical BNYDC Archive, as dictated by the terms in its Access and Use Policy.

## 8 Loans

The BNYDC Archives requires a written loan agreement detailing the rights and responsibilities of each party engaged in both outgoing and incoming loans.

### 8.1 Outgoing Loans:

The Archives will only loan its archival materials to tenants of the Brooklyn Navy Yard, museums, historical societies, libraries or other cultural or scholarly institutions that comply with the criteria outlined by the loan agreement. The Archivist must approve all outgoing loans. Outgoing loans will be guided by the following criteria:

1. The Archives requires its documents and artifacts be afforded a level of care and protection generally expected in an archival environment and shall be returned to the Archives in the same condition they were loaned. All loaned documents or artifacts must be kept in an environment equipped to protect them against fire, smoke, flooding, extreme temperatures and humidity, light damage, pests, dirt and all other environmental hazards. The building where loaned documents and objects are housed must have either physical or electronic security in place at the time of the loan. Experienced personnel only shall be permitted to handle loaned items. If a loaned item should be lost or damaged the borrower must give prompt written notice to the Archives.



2. Objects loaned from the Archives will be either displayed or repurposed, subject to BNYDC's approval. Conditions governing such actions are documented in the loan agreement. Objects shall only be repurposed if the borrower's proposal aligns with the historical context of the Brooklyn Navy Yard, and the new object is displayed in the Brooklyn Navy Yard.
3. Objects loaned from the Archives and displayed by the borrower must not be altered, cleaned or repaired in any way without written permission by the Archivist. This includes removal from frames, mats, vitrines, or bases unless it is deemed necessary in an emergency situation to protect the items from damage. Scientific examination of objects is strictly prohibited without BNYDC's prior written approval.
4. Condition reports by the borrowing institution shall be filed with the Archives promptly after the receipt of loaned items. A second condition report shall be filed just prior to the return of the loaned items.
5. Packing and shipping of all loaned items are the responsibility of the borrowing institution unless otherwise agreed to in the loan agreement. The packing and shipping needs of loaned items require the Archives' approval in advance of shipping the items.
6. Except as otherwise agreed by the Archivist, the borrower shall provide insurance as specified in the loan agreement.
7. The Archives in its sole and absolute discretion may impose loan restrictions.
8. The Archivist shall determine the loan end date.
9. Only those items certified as being wholly owned by the Archives, and free of loan and use restrictions shall be made available for loan.
10. All loans exhibited and/or reproduced by the borrower must be approved by the Archives and proper credit must be provided in the form of labels, caption or citation unless otherwise agreed upon in writing. The exact wording of credit lines will be discussed and given in writing prior to the loan agreement.
11. Prior to the shipment of any loaned items, the Archives and the borrower shall sign a loan agreement.

## 8.2 Incoming Loans:

The Archives will accept loans for the purpose of exhibition or research at the approval of the Archivist and the ED of Exhibits and Programs. Incoming loans will be guided by the following criteria:

1. Loans to the Archives will be afforded the same care ascribed to its own archival materials. Reasonable care and precautions will be observed for all incoming loans.
2. Depending on the nature of the loaned object, either the lender or BNYDC, per the terms of the loan agreement, may be required to insure the object while it is loaned to BNYDC.
3. All objects(s): (i) in fragile condition; or (ii) without clear provenance; or (iii) thought stolen; or (iv) imported illegally or otherwise embroiled in legal proceedings will not be accepted by the Archives.
4. Condition reports shall be furnished by the Archives immediately after the receipt of loaned objects. A second condition report shall be filed just prior to the return of the loaned items.
5. Prior to the receipt of any loaned objects, the Archives and the lender shall sign a loan agreement.



## 9 Unclaimed Loans, Abandoned and Found Objects

The New York State Museum Property Law (Article 5, Section 233.aa of the New York State Education Law) dictates the process to establish ownership of undocumented property. Therefore, any undocumented tangible objects found in the Brooklyn Navy Yard that may have “intrinsic, historic, artistic, scientific or cultural value” shall be appraised by the Records Manager/Archivist and ED of Exhibits and Programs. It will be determined for (i) inclusion in the Archives’ collections; (ii) exhibition at BLDG 92; (iii) repurposed in a manner that demonstrates the continuity for the material through historic, present, and future use at the Yard; or, (iv) disposed of as Archives staff see fit.

## 10 Records

The following record types will be maintained by Archives staff:

1. Accession records: includes deeds of gift, bills of sale, provenance records, documentation showing acquisition approval and any correspondence relating to the acquisition of items into the Archives’ holdings.
2. Conservation records: includes documents detailing the condition, preservation and conservation of archival materials.
3. Access records: includes registration forms documenting external use of the Archives’ holdings.
4. Loan records: includes outgoing and incoming loan forms, condition reports, packing and shipping documents, and loan appraisal documents.
5. Inventories: includes inventory lists and catalog records.
6. Insurance: if applicable, will include any documentation pertaining to the value of items within the Archives’ holdings.