

Oak Bay Archives

Frequently Asked Questions

What is an Archives?

The Oak Bay Archives is a repository for original documents, records, photographs and ephemera relevant to the District of Oak Bay. An archives is also a facility where historical records are available for public research.

How does an archives differ from a museum?

While a museum deals in three dimensional items or artifacts, archives preserve two dimensional documents, records, photographs and rare ephemera. Paintings and electronic records on tapes, CD, and DVD are also collected.

What is archival material?

Archival material consists of original records, documents and photographs or material that is rare and unique. For example: a family photograph album is an archival document, while a scanned or photocopied replica would be non-archival.

What is non-archival material?

The archives maintains non-archival reference material, such as photocopied documents, photographs, and news articles. Non-archival documents are not subject to the standards necessary for preservation of archival material.

How is the archival material stored and cared for?

Material acquired and appraised as having archival value is listed, described and documented in an accession record. It is preserved and stored in acid free folders and boxes in a secure area of the archives.

Who may use the archives?

Scholars, students and the general public have access to the archives. Researchers will be provided with requested material, but may not remove it from the premises.

Can researchers make copies of archival documents and photographs?

Researchers are encouraged to bring a digital camera if they wish to make copies of photographs and documents (some restrictions apply). Photocopies can be provided for a charge of 25 cents per page.

When can I visit the Archives?

Visitors are welcome during open hours, Tuesday 9:30am to noon & Thursday 1 to 3pm, or at other times by appointment. Academic researchers and students are encouraged to make an appointment.

Can family or business records be donated to the archives?

Yes, Oak Bay Archives gratefully accepts donations. Archives are the best place for donors to preserve their precious original records and documents. Your collection will be preserved and stored in secure premises and will be available for present and future generations. Family members or business associates wishing to view the collection have access in perpetuity.

Can I research my home or property at the archives?

Yes, if you are the owner of the property. Building files are available for over 200 homes; there is an inventory of all residential buildings that contains relevant dates. Plans and other records may be available from the Building and Planning Department in the Municipal Hall. Past owners may be researched at the Land Titles Office and past owners and/or residents may be found in old City Directories available at the main branch of the Victoria Library or the City of Victoria Archives. The Oak Bay Archives does not have a set of city directories but we will be please to help you organize your research.