

# Committee to Establish a Middlesex County Archives

## OFFICERS

**Chair** – Carol Small  
*proposedmiddlesexcounty  
archive@gmail.com*

**Secretary** – Bev Hughes

**Archivist** – Carolynn  
Bart-Riedstra

## MEMBERS

Ekfrid Community  
Museum

Glencoe & District  
Historical Society

Komoka Railway Museum

London & Middlesex  
County Branch, Ontario  
Genealogical Society

London & Middlesex  
Historical Society

Lucan Area Heritage  
Society

Middlesex Centre  
Archives

Middlesex Centre  
Historical Society

Mossley Post Heritage  
& Citizenship Society

Strathroy Historical  
Society

Wardsville Historical  
Museum

Westminster Township  
Historical Society

Representatives from all  
Middlesex Communities

## Resources Required

Ideally, an archives building needs a stand-alone building with:

**A Reference/Reading Room:** This is for the public and would be the only area which researchers would have access to. The Reference/Reading Room should be set up with worktables, chairs and a reference computer. There should also be an area with lockers for researchers to place bags, coats and food/beverages. This room would have a desk and office chair for the Reference staff, a computer, possibly a phone and a photocopier. Reference/Reading Rooms serve as reference area for patrons. It holds books that include township history books, area publications, family histories and other secondary sources.

**Administration Office:** This is required for staff when they are not working in the reference area or when they are dealing with private information and phone calls. Office furniture, a desk, chairs, a computer and filing cabinets would be essentials.

**Loading Dock:** This is especially important if large donations are coming from a municipality or organization. The loading dock makes it easier to move the boxes without having to carry them too far. A book-trolley or cart would be helpful to move boxes. They can then be taken to the Holding Area.

**Holding Area:** This is adjacent to the storage area. It provides a place to hold recently-donated records which might need isolation. Currently, with Covid-19 guidelines, paper records are quarantined for 48 hours before handling. Other isolation conditions can be the presence of mold, insects or the need to clean documents in general. Following isolation, the records can be processed for inclusion in the archival collection. A bay of shelving, a work desk and chair would be required.

**Processing Area:** This is where the records will be arranged and described before being placed in the storage area. It would require several large tables, a computer, office chair and possibly a phone. Shelving would be helpful to place items before and after processing.

**Storage area:** This is probably the most important area of the Archives and will require the most capital expense. The storage area should be at least 2/3 the size of the building. This is to provide for growth, as records accumulate quickly once the facility is open. It is also cheaper to have more space when constructing a building than trying to add an addition later. Rack-shelving or mobile-shelving is suggested to effectively use the space. Air-conditioning and dehumidifiers are also required to maintain the temperature and the humidity. A fire-suppression system should be installed as well as a fire and water alarm system. A book cart would be useful as well as at least one ladder that holds banker boxes.

**Staff:** There needs to be at least 4 staff - the County Archivist, an Associate Archivist and two technicians. Given the size of the municipality, this is the minimum staff to start. Other staff could be hired as needed. There are programs for Young Canada Works and co-op placements to augment the staff.

**Acid-free Supplies:** Archives require acid-free boxes (including banker and Hollinger), acid-free file folders, gloves, encapsulating material, acid-free photograph sleeves and other items. These are costly and a minimum of \$3,000 annually should be budgeted.

The capital costs of furniture, computers and shelving are set-up costs. The operating costs usually relate to staffing and items like supplies.

If this is not a stand-alone building, the facilities can be shared with a museum, library or Municipal Administration Office. However, there is definitely a need for a reference room, an environmentally controlled area and an administrative office.