

57586 City Archive Items

Why is the Edinburgh Council City Archives' invaluable and complete collection of copies of the Edinburgh and Leith Post Office Directories used to decorate an office at the City Archives, where they are exposed to sunlight and dust, instead of being kept in proper archival conditions? Who made the decision to use these books as office decor? How many other City Archive items are used as office decor at the City Archives, instead of being kept in proper archival conditions?

Edinburgh City Archives holds Edinburgh and Leith Post Office directories in our searchroom on Level 1 of the City Chambers. They are there as reference material for use by researchers and staff. They are not used as decoration in any office.

Edinburgh and Leith Post Office directories are not stored in our archive stores because they are not unique – they were published in their day in their hundreds, if not thousands of copies. As such, these directories can still be physically accessed in multiple locations across the city – including [Central Library](#) and the [National Library of Scotland](#). They have also been digitised by the [National Library of Scotland](#).

Keeping reference material in an archive searchroom is a common practice by many archive services. Such volumes are useful for visitors to find out street address information and names and locations of organisations at a particular time. We have a variety of other published volumes, indices and copies of records on the shelves in our searchroom, reference room and map room on the same basis. They are not unique and their utility as easy to reach reference volumes outweighs any need for them to be preserved to the same degree as our actual archives. These rooms are secure, however, being locked individually overnight and within a secure swipe card zone with internal CCTV. Then there is the wider security of the City Chambers itself.

No archive item in our collections is used for decoration. We do have a display case with archive items in it, but it is secure against dust and sunlight – being a lockable glass case in a corridor without any windows. I believe the case currently has 4 items in it. We do change these items from time to time.