

WIRRAL COUNCIL

PENSIONS COMMITTEE

22 SEPTEMBER 2009

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

CUNARD ARCHIVES

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This paper recommends that Members approve a loan or gift of certain miscellaneous documents currently in the basement of the Cunard Building to the Merseyside Maritime Museum and various local authorities' archives services.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Cunard Building basement area is used partially for storage but there is unoccupied space which holds miscellaneous books and papers abandoned by previous occupants of the building. These documents are disorganised, not protected from deterioration and not available to the public. MPF does not have the expertise or resources to catalogue these items and store them appropriately.
- 2.2 In order to determine whether the items had any intrinsic value, I arranged for the archivist of the Maritime Museum to visit the Cunard Building to assess them.
- 2.3 The assessment concluded that there was no intrinsic value in the items but that the Museum would be interested in certain items. The Cunard Line (now Carnival) has loaned the Museum technical drawings for all the Cunard vessels from Britannia to the QE2. Of particular interest to the Museum is extensive correspondence in relation to the fitting out of the Queen Mary and specifications for the panelling, furnishings and decorative fittings ordered from Waring & Gillow as well as various trade and transport agreements.
- 2.4 There are many other non-maritime papers, microfiche and other records. An architectural practice left a number of architectural drawings which are likely to be of interest to the relevant Local Authority archives services.

3. MARITIME MUSEUM

- 3.1 The Museum has offered to take and catalogue all the records. Those pertinent to the Museum would be held in its archive/library and other items would be the Liverpool Records Office, Liverpool University, or the appropriate Local Authority archives service. This would ensure that all documents of interest were recorded, appropriately stored and available to researchers.

3.2 The Museum is willing to accept a loan of the items but this is administratively onerous as it would require them to renew the loan every three years, seek permission for any restoration work and complicate the dispersion of non-relevant items to other archives. Hence, a gift of the items would be preferred.

4. FINANCIAL AND STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are none arising from this report.

5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IMPLICATIONS

5.1. There are none arising from this report.

6. COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

6.1. There are none arising from this report.

7. LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS

7.1. This report has no particular implications for any Members or wards.

8. LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

8.1. There are none arising from this report.

9. PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

9.1. There are none arising from this report.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None were used in the preparation of this report.

11. RECOMMENDATION

11.1 That Members determine whether the Cunard Building records should be gifted or loaned to the Maritime Museum and the relevant Local Authority archives services.

IAN COLEMAN
DIRECTOR OF FINANCE