



 THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND

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LAMBETH PALACE  
LIBRARY

The Secretary  
30-year Rule Review  
c/o The National Archives  
Kew  
TW9 4DU

20<sup>th</sup> February 2008

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to you on behalf of Lambeth Palace Library, the historic library of the Archbishops of Canterbury and the principal library and record office for the history of the Church of England. The Library is maintained by the Church Commissioners, and is not a public authority as defined by the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

The Library's collections are freely available to the public for research, and it receives around 1600 reader visits per year and answers around 6000 enquiries. The Library operates a thirty year closure rule for the papers of the Archbishops of Canterbury and for other collections, and wishes to highlight the following issues in order to assist the Review.

Occasionally the Library holds papers which dovetail with material held in public authorities, such as correspondence between government departments and the Archbishop's staff. Similarly, the files of some government departments will hold correspondence and papers emanating from the Archbishop and his staff.

Differences in access policies can therefore lead to unevenness in the availability of related material, indeed there will currently be material held by public authorities which is also held at Lambeth and will not be released here until thirty years have elapsed. Such unevenness can also lead to difficulties in managing the expectations of users accustomed to dealing with archives held in public authorities.

The Library actively promotes access to its collections in a broad range of user communities, however despite its desire to promote access, its efforts to do so are inevitably constrained by the level of resources made available to it. It receives no public funding.

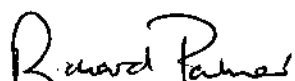
There is also a danger that record creators will be less likely to maintain and retain comprehensive records if they are going to be subject to earlier release, in areas where there is no legislative obligation to maintain such records, as is true of the majority of records created by UK organisations.

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Website: <http://www.lambethpalacelibrary.org>



Lambeth Palace Library occupies an unusual position, although one which is common to several specialist repositories, namely it is not publicly funded and does not therefore come under the definition of a public body, yet its collections and history give rise to an accepted obligation that it will preserve the records in its care effectively and make them freely available to those who wish to see them. The Library feels that the position of such archives should not be neglected by the Review.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Richard Palmer  
Librarian and Archivist

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