

# Sources for researching the history of the National Centre for Popular Music



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Front cover illustrations:

National Centre for Popular Music

([www.picturesheffield.com](http://www.picturesheffield.com) refs. u00006, t04749, u00005)

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# Contents

Introduction .....	4
Timeline showing key dates .....	5
List of documents, books, photographs and other items available at Sheffield City Archives and Local Studies Library .....	6
Library and Archive collections held elsewhere .....	10
Local Studies Library and Sheffield City Archives Facilities .....	11
Adding to our collections .....	11
Contact Details.....	12

## Introduction

This booklet lists sources available within Sheffield City Archives and Local Studies Library for the study of the National Centre for Popular Music (NCPM).

The National Centre for Popular Music was a short-lived visitor attraction in the centre of Sheffield. It aimed to be '*an innovative visitor centre and education resource celebrating the dynamism and diversity of popular music*'. It was designed to attract visitors to Sheffield and boost the local economy as the city emerged from a difficult economic period where industries, such as steel and manufacturing, had faced a period of rapid decline. Those involved in planning the venture were partly inspired by the success of both the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television in Bradford, and the Rock n' Roll Hall of Fame, in the USA.

The Centre was also to act as an anchor in the developing Cultural Industries Quarter (CIQ). However, it failed to attract the number of visitors required, and despite attempts to boost visitor figures, the Centre closed just 17 months after it opened.

The £15M venture was funded to the tune of £11M by the national lottery – at the time it was the fourth largest grant given to a project outside London.

The unique design of the building – 4 drums representing different aspects of music - dance music, religion, love and rebellion, and unique singers, attracted considerable comment.

Following the Centre's closure there were unsuccessful attempts to turn the building into a live music venue. In 2002 the building was sold to Yorkshire Forward at a tenth of its construction cost, and a year later it became the new home of Sheffield Hallam University's Student Union.

This *Guide* is not a detailed history of the NCPM; it merely points the reader who wishes to carry out their own research to what is available within Sheffield Libraries and Archives.

As more items are catalogued and the collections are used by researchers it is likely that additional references will come to light. More detailed searching of our catalogues, using a wide range of terms may reveal additional material.

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<sup>1</sup> Promotional brochure published by the National Centre for Popular Music Development Office, c. 1995 (Sheffield Local Studies: MP 5345 M)

## Timeline showing key dates

1988	Reports recommend a national centre for popular music as a major tourist attraction for Sheffield and as an 'anchor' in the Cultural Industries Quarter (CIQ).
1994	Original proposed opening date.
1997	Construction work begins.
Mar 1999	The NCPM opens as 'a showcase for the historical, cultural and social impact of pop'.
Jul 2000	Due to low visitor numbers and financial difficulties the NCPM closes.
2001	Attempts made to turn the venue into a live music venue.
2002	Building sold to Yorkshire Forward for £1.8M.
2003	The building becomes the new home of Sheffield Hallam University's Student Union

## List of documents, books, photographs and other items available at Sheffield City Archives and Local Studies Library

*A National Centre for Popular Music in Sheffield: A Report* (Sheffield City Council. Employment and Economic Development Department, 1988)  
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: 781.57 SSTQ*)

Frith, Simon, *The National Centre for Popular Music: A Report* (Strathclyde University, 1988) (Draft report (pt. 1&2 only))  
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: 781.57 SSTQ*)

It is possible that the minutes of the Sheffield City Council and its committees, c. 1988 - 2000 include references to the National Centre for Popular Music.  
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: 352.042 SQ*)

National Centre for Popular Music: Marketing Strategy and Business Plan (Coopers and Lybrand, 1991 and 1992)  
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: 781.57 SSTQ*)

*National Centre for Popular Music: Development Study. A Submission to Sourcerule Ltd.* (Cobham Resource Consultants, 1991)  
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: 781.57 SSTQ*)

*National Centre for Popular Music in the Cultural Industries Quarter, Sheffield: A Proposal Prepared for Sourcerule Ltd* (National Centre for Popular Music Development Company) (L & R Leisure PLC, 1991)  
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: 781.57 SSTQ*)

*National Centre for Popular Music: Marketing Strategy and Business Plan Proposals; Prepared for Sourcerule Ltd* (Grant Leisure Group, 1991)  
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: 781.57 SSTQ*)

*Sheffield - the Welcome City.* A *Sheffield Telegraph* Supplement, 10 May 1991  
(Sheffield Newspapers Ltd., 1991)

Paul Skelton, Principal Development Officer, Cultural Industries Quarter (CIQ), talks about a unique Sheffield concept - the CIQ (incl. the National Centre for Popular Music).

(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: MP 997 L*)

Article about the centre to be opened in 1994 in *Success in Sheffield*, No 23, Summer 1991, page 6  
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: 914.274 SQ*)

Interview with Development Director on the planned NCPM in *Exit Thirty-Three*, issue 1, April/May 1992, page 7  
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: 705 SQ*)

Dickson, Jane, *Body Builder* (*The Independent*, 1999)  
Interview with Architect Nigel Coates.  
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: MP 1843 L*)

*National Centre for Popular Music - An Introductory Walkthrough* (Sheffield City Council, Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), 1990s)  
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: MP 4993 M*)

Sheffield City Council, Chief Executive's file regarding the National Centre for Popular Music, 1991 - 1994  
Includes marketing strategy and business plan (1992), and annual report (1992/3)  
(*Sheffield City Archives: CA1022/4*)

Sheffield City Council, Director of Leisure Service's file: Cultural Industries Quarter (CIQ) and National Centre for Popular Music 1992 - 1994  
(*Sheffield City Archives: acc. 2007/101 Box 13 DMT 172*)

Details of what the National Centre for Popular Music will cover in *Sheffield Economic Development Plan 1993-1994*, pages 23-24  
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: 338.94274 SQ*)

Project Summary (National Centre for Popular Music Development Office, 1990s)  
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: MP 5346 M*)

Melvin, Jeremy, *Play that Funky Music, White Boy* (Build Design report on an architecture student's dream commission: a pop music centre, 1996)  
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: MP 1810 L*)

Correspondence of Sheffield City Council leisure and library services relating to NCPM, 1990s  
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: MP FOLDER 55*)

*Playlist* (newsletter), postcards, leaflets, brochures, etc., 1990s  
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: MP 3357 M, MP 5066 M, MP 5345 M, MP 6033 S, MP 6034 S, MP 6036 S*)

*Exhibition Guide* [background information about the various themed areas in the National Centre for Popular Music and making use of the interactive exhibits]  
(National Centre for Popular Music: Development Office, 1990s)  
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: MP 5347 M*)

Article on Bob Hall, chairman of the National Centre for Popular Music, in *Profile*, Nov 1997, pages 4-5  
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: 052.74 SQ*)

Sheffield Goes Pop, taken from *Architects' Journal*, 22, Oct 1998  
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: MP 3832 M*)

Brown, Adam, *Music Policy in Sheffield, Manchester and Liverpool* (Manchester Institute for Popular Culture, 1998)  
(*Sheffield Local Studies Library: 352.9454 SSTQ*)

Powell, Kenneth, A Smash Hit Played on Four Drums (Taken from *The Architects' Journal*, October 1998)  
(Sheffield Local Studies Library: MP 5344 M)

National Centre for Popular Music; [Report of] Sheffield City Council, Directorate of Planning and Economic Development, 1995  
(Sheffield Local Studies Library: MP 5067 M)

National Centre for Popular Music, *Where Pop Lives: The Insider's Guide*, 1999  
(Sheffield Local Studies Library: 781.64074 SSTQ)

Moles, Steve, Your Ticket to the Stones: Steve Moles visits The National Centre For Popular Music - The World's First Interactive Exhibition to Celebrate Contemporary Music, (taken from *Lighting and Sound International, The Engineering Technology Monthly*, Mar 1999, pages 39-42  
(Sheffield Local Studies Library: 781.57 E)

Dunn, David, *Where Pop Lives: Join Us on a Tour of Britain's Brightest New Attraction* (Sheffield Newspapers, 1999)  
(Sheffield Local Studies Library: MP 1760 VL)

Latham, Laura, Made in Sheffield (taken from *In Britain*, Aug 1999)  
(Sheffield Local Studies Library: MP 3833 M)

Helen Jackson MP - files relating to her involvement in the National Centre for Popular Music, 1980s - 2004. (Note: written permission is required to access these papers. Contact Sheffield City Archives for information.)  
(Sheffield Archives: MP9)

Brief description of the proposals for the centre in *Sheffield Euro Guide '96*, page 43  
(Sheffield Local Studies Library: 914.274 SQ)

Miscellaneous worksheets designed for children to use in the National Centre for Popular Music (The National Centre for Popular Music: Development Office, 1998)  
(Sheffield Local Studies Library: MP 5348 M)

Halfacree, Keith, *Rock 'N' Stroll: Promoting the Consumption of Musical Places* (The North-West Geographer, 2000)  
(Sheffield Local Studies Library: MP 127 E)

Kam, Jacqueline, Success in Failure: The National Centre for Popular Music in Critical Studies in Innovation, vol. 22, 2004  
(Sheffield Local Studies Library: 781.63 E)

Hatherley, Owen, *A Guide to the New Ruins of Great Britain* (Verso, 2010)  
Pages 109-110 refer to the National Centre for Popular Music.  
(Sheffield Local Studies Library: 720.941 S)



Same Place, Different Day: Sheaf Square in *My Kind of Town*, issue 3, c. 2000  
(comparative photographs of Sheaf Square)  
(Sheffield Local Studies Library: 942.74 SQ)

Brabazon, Tara, and Stephen Mallinder, Popping the Museum: The Case of Sheffield and Preston from *Museum and Society*, vol. 4 no. 2, 2006  
(Sheffield Local Studies Library: 781.63 SQ)

Mallinder, Stephen, *Sheffield is Not Sexy* (Nebula, 2007)  
Article exploring the issues of Sheffield's identity and its use of popular music and culture (specifically the failure of The National Centre for Popular Music) to boost its post-industrial economy.  
(Sheffield Local Studies Library: 781.63 SSTQ)

*UK Music, Imagine - The Value of Music Heritage Tourism in the UK*, 2014  
(Sheffield Local Studies Library: 781.63 E)

Brandellero, Amanda and Susanne Jansen (2014) Popular Music as Cultural Heritage: Scoping out the Field of Practice in *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, vol. 20 no. 3, pages 224-240  
(Sheffield Local Studies Library: 781.63 E)

Ward, Kit, *A Tale of Lottery-Funded Hubris* (2018)  
(Sheffield Local Studies Library: MP 126 E)

Rotherham, Ian, *Sheffield in 50 Buildings* (Amberley, 2018)  
(Sheffield Local Studies Library: 942.81 S)

Sheffield Local Studies Library local newspaper cuttings collection includes articles about the National Centre for Popular Music  
(Sheffield Local Studies Library: microfiche)

The British Library British Newspaper Archive (BNA) website includes over sixty-eight million pages from over 700 UK national and local newspapers [Home | Search the archive | British Newspaper Archive](#). Access to the British Newspaper Archive is free at every Sheffield City Council Library and at the City Archives.

In addition, microfilms of the main Sheffield newspaper titles are also available at Sheffield Local Studies Library. The *Star* and the *Sheffield Telegraph* cover the relevant period.

Archives of some national newspapers are available on the internet, notably *The Times* ([The Times Digital Archive \(gale.com\)](#)) and *The Guardian* ([How to access past articles from the Guardian and Observer archive | Information | The Guardian](#))

Over 100,000 images from the Sheffield Local Studies Library and City Archives photographic collections are available to search online at [www.picturesheffield.com](http://www.picturesheffield.com).

## Library and Archive collections held elsewhere

The National Archives holds documents of the UK Government. A search of their catalogue <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/> may reveal relevant files.

The Archives Hub contains catalogues describing archives held in universities and colleges in the UK <https://archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk/>

The following journals aren't available at Sheffield Libraries, but are worth noting:

Jones, P., Reflections on the Competition for National Centre for Popular Music, Sheffield in *Architectural Research Quarterly*, 1996, vol. 1 issue 4, pages 16-27

Oatley, N. and Mackie, C., Sheffield's Cultural Industries Quarter in *Local Economy*, 1996, vol. 11 issue 2, pages 172-179

## Local Studies Library and Sheffield City Archives Facilities

Sheffield City Archives and Local Studies services collect and preserve original records and printed material relating to Sheffield and the surrounding area.

The information dates from the 12<sup>th</sup> century to the present and relates to Sheffield, South Yorkshire and north Derbyshire.

Included are extensive collections of books • pamphlets • photographs • church registers • newspapers • census records • minutes • diaries • films • maps • deeds • records from schools • hospitals • businesses and charities • family estates • personal papers etc.

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- Free access to the British Newspaper Archive
- Microform machines and printers
- Catalogues and indexes
- CD-Rom library
- On-line image library

### Adding to our collections

Sheffield Libraries and Archives seeks to preserve information about events in our city's history. If you have photographs or personal papers that may be worth preserving, please consider safeguarding them for current and future generations by placing them in the care of Sheffield Libraries and Archives. It is only through the generosity of individuals and organisations that we are able to have a complete record of important events in the history of Sheffield and the nation. We are interested in photographs, flyers and posters, minutes of meetings etc. For advice on record keeping and the facilities we offer please email us ([archives@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:archives@sheffield.gov.uk) or telephone 0114 203 9395).

## Contact Details

### Sheffield Local Studies Library

1<sup>st</sup> floor  
Central Library  
Surrey Street  
Sheffield  
S1 1XZ

Tel: 0114 273 4753

Email: [archives@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:archives@sheffield.gov.uk)

### Sheffield City Archives

52 Shoreham Street  
Sheffield  
S1 4SP

Tel: 0114 203 9395

Email: [archives@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:archives@sheffield.gov.uk)

Website: [www.sheffield.gov.uk/archives](http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/archives)

Search our catalogues:

*(not all of the collections are fully catalogued so if you can't find what you are looking for, please contact us for further advice)*

Local Studies Library catalogue: [https://library.sheffield.gov.uk/client/en\\_GB/default](https://library.sheffield.gov.uk/client/en_GB/default)

City Archives catalogue: <http://www.calmview.eu/SheffieldArchives/CalmView/>

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Read our blogs <http://shefflibraries.blogspot.co.uk/>

View some of our photographs on Flickr [www.flickr.com/photos/shefflibraries](http://www.flickr.com/photos/shefflibraries)