

## Access to Development Documentation

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Relevant Legislation:	Copyright Act 1965 (Cth) Development Act 1993 Development Regulations 2008 Freedom of Information Act 1991 (SA) Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016 State Records Act 1997
Related Policies:	n/a

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to establish a framework for the access by the public to development documentation.

### 2. Strategic Plan Desired Outcomes

- 2.1 'Leading best practice and compliance in Council business'

### 3. Our Approach

- 3.1 Remain compliant with all relevant legislation, standards, codes through effective risk management.

### 4. Legislative Requirements and Corporate Policy Context

- 4.1 Under the *Development Act 1993 (SA)* and *Development Regulations 2008 (SA)* members of the public have various entitlements to information held by the Council that are relevant to development applications and approved building work.
- 4.2 The *Freedom of Information Act 1991 (SA)* provides a legally enforceable right for members of the public to access other Council information which is not required to be made publicly available.

- 4.3 Providing information to members of the public may require the reproduction of documents. The Council is also obligated to reproduce documents in the course of adhering to records management obligations under the *State Records Act 1997 (SA)*.
- 4.4 As well as being bound by the requirements of the above Acts, the Council is subject to the Copyright Act 1968 (Cth), which restricts the reproduction of written material, artistic works and other creative works, without permission of the copyright owner.
- 4.5 This Policy affirms the Council's commitment to openness and transparency in the provision of information to the public in accordance with its legislative obligations and its commitment to high standards of records management whilst avoiding infringing copyright in that information.

## 5. Interpretation

- 5.1 For the purpose of this policy:
  - 5.1.1 "work" means a literary, dramatic, musical or artistic work
  - 5.1.2 "record" means written, graphic or pictorial matter;
- 5.2 A disk, tape, film or other object that contains information or from which information may be reproduced (with or without the aid of another object or device);
- 5.3 "official record" means a record made or received by the Council in the conduct of its business, but does not include;
  - 5.3.1 a record made or received by an agency for delivery or transmission to another person or body (other than an agency) and so delivered or transmitted; or
  - 5.3.2 a record made by an agency as a draft only and not for further use or reference; or
  - 5.3.3 a record received into or made for the collection of a library, museum or art gallery and not otherwise associated with the business of the agency; or
  - 5.3.4 a Commonwealth record as defined by the *Archives Act 1983* of the Commonwealth or an Act of the Commonwealth enacted in substitution for that Act; or
  - 5.3.5 a record that has been transferred to the Commonwealth.

## 6. Policy

### 6.1 Objective

The purpose of this policy is to establish a framework for the access by the public to development documentation.

### 6.2 Copyright

#### 6.2.1 What is copyright?

- 6.2.1.1 Copyright is a form of property which exists in written, artistic and other "works". Copyright only exists through the operation of the *Copyright Act*. As with other forms of property, copyright may be sold or transferred, and allows persons who create works to derive an income from them.
  - 6.2.1.2 The *Copyright Act* creates legally enforceable intellectual property rights in works by ensuring that works cannot be reproduced without the prior permission of the copyright owner.
  - 6.2.1.3 Where a work is reproduced without permission, a copyright infringement occurs which, in turn, gives rise to a right for the copyright owner to take civil (and in some cases, criminal) action against the infringer.
  - 6.2.1.4 Copyright does not protect mere ideas, rather, it protects the way that ideas and information are described, illustrated or documented.
- 6.2.2 When does copyright protection arise?
- 6.2.2.1 Copyright protection automatically arises as soon as a work is recorded or fixed onto a medium which can be reproduced.
  - 6.2.2.2 Copyright exists in works regardless of whether or not a work is endorsed with a "©" symbol and whether or not it contains a copyright warning.
- 6.2.3 Who owns copyright?
- 6.2.3.1 Generally, copyright is owned by the individual creator or author of the work or, where a work is created by a person during the course of their employment, their employer will own copyright.
  - 6.2.3.2 For example, where a Council employee creates a "work" during the course of their employment and in accordance with their job description – in such cases, copyright automatically vests in the employer.
  - 6.2.3.3 Copyright ownership can be transferred ("assigned") by way of a written agreement. Unless copyright has been assigned to the Council:
    - 6.2.3.3.1 copyright in building plans is owned by the architect or draftsman who drew them;
    - 6.2.3.3.2 copyright in a report is owned by the author of the report; and
    - 6.2.3.3.3 copyright in a table or graph or other technical information is owned by its creator.
- 6.2.4 What is a Copyright Infringement?
- 6.2.4.1 A copyright infringement is an unauthorised reproduction of a work where it is (amongst other things):
    - 6.2.4.1.1 photocopied;
    - 6.2.4.1.2 scanned;
    - 6.2.4.1.3 published on a website;

6.2.4.1.4 displayed on an overhead screen; and

6.2.4.1.5 e-mailed.

#### 6.2.5 When can works be lawfully reproduced?

6.2.5.1 Works can be reproduced without committing a copyright infringement where the Council is the owner of the copyright, or where the Council has permission, called a "licence", which allows it to lawfully reproduce a document.

6.2.5.2 In this Policy, the Council relies upon implied licences to allow it to reproduce works, where:

6.2.5.2.1 reproduction is necessary by way of legal obligation; or

6.2.5.2.2 reproduction is necessary out of practical necessity and in the circumstances, it is reasonable to expect that the owner of copyright would know that their work is required to be reproduced.

## 7. Development Act

### 7.1 Internal reproduction of documents for assessment purposes.

7.1.1 During the assessment of a development application, Council staff need to make reproductions of plans and other works so that they may be marked, or drawn upon, and so that original copies may be preserved. Further, such documents often need to be scanned so that they can be logged and viewed electronically, and stored and saved into the Council's records management system.

7.1.2 As the reproduction of works is necessary for development assessment purposes, such works can lawfully be reproduced by the Council for internal purposes.

7.1.3 Public notification of category 2 and 3 development applications:

7.1.4 Regulation 34(1) of the *Development Regulations 2008* provides that the Council must ensure that the following documents, lodged with category 2 and 3 development applications, are made available for inspection by the public during the period of public notice:

7.1.4.1 the application; and

7.1.4.2 any supporting plans, drawings, specifications or other documents or information provided to the Council; and

7.1.4.3 any statement of effect (where applicable).

7.2 Regulation 34(2) and regulation 34(3) state that the Council must provide to a member of the public, a copy of any information available for inspection where:

7.2.1 a request is made within the inspection period (i.e. for 10 business days after notice is given by the Council – see Regulation 35, *Development Regulations*); and

- 7.2.2 a fee fixed by the Council is paid; and
  - 7.2.3 the person who requests the copy provides their name, address and contact details to the Council.
  - 7.2.4 Accordingly, the Council will reproduce works submitted as part of a development application for the purposes of regulation 34 as this is a necessary requirement of the Development Regulations.
  - 7.2.5 The Council will not publish regulation 34(1) documents on its website. If a member of the public wishes to inspect and/or obtain a copy of a development application document during its public notification period, that person must attend the Council's offices in person.
- 7.3 Copies of application documents for the Council Assessment Panel (CAP) agendas.
- 7.3.1 CAP agendas necessarily contain officer reports and all documents relevant to development applications to be determined by the CAP, including copyright-protected works.
  - 7.3.2 Section 56A(15) of the *Development Act* provides that members of the public are entitled to reasonable access to the CAP agendas. An agenda is the list of items to be deliberated upon by the CAP at its meeting and does not include reports and other attachments to the agenda.
  - 7.3.3 Due to this legal obligation, the Council enjoys an implied licence of necessity for providing copies of such documents to its CAP members, and to staff attending a CAP meeting.
  - 7.3.4 However, this requirement does not extend to a right to members of the public to access officer reports and other attachments to that agenda.
  - 7.3.5 Accordingly, the Council cannot provide physical copies of copyright-protected works such as plans and other supporting documents for a development application attached to the CAP agenda to members of the public as this would constitute a copyright infringement. Reports of officers will be attached to the public agenda papers.
  - 7.3.6 The Council publishes its CAP agendas on its website in accordance with section 56A of the *Development Act*. Officer reports are also published. Other attachments are not published on the Council's website as to do so could amount to an infringement of copyright.
- 7.4 Inspection and copies of the register of applications:
- 7.4.1 The Council is required to keep a register of development applications, pursuant to regulation 98(1) of the *Development Regulations 2008*. From 1 January 2014, this register must also be published on the Council's website.
  - 7.4.2 The register is required to contain information about development applications, not the application documents themselves. The register should contain:
    - 7.4.2.1 the name and address of the applicant (or of each applicant);
    - 7.4.2.2 the date of the application;
    - 7.4.2.3 the date on which the application was received by the Council or other relevant authority;
    - 7.4.2.4 a description of the land which is the subject of the application;

- 7.4.2.5 a brief summary of the matters, acts or things in respect of which any consent or approval is sought;
  - 7.4.2.6 details of any referral or concurrence on the application;
  - 7.4.2.7 whether any decision is made on the application by the Council, a joint assessment panel, the State Planning Commission or the Governor (where appropriate);
  - 7.4.2.8 any decision on the application;
- 7.4.3 In the case of an application for building rules consent – the fee or fees payable;
- 7.4.3.1 the date of the commencement of any building work and the date of the completion of any building work; and
  - 7.4.3.2 if any decision on the application is the subject of an appeal, the result of the appeal.
- 7.4.4 The Council must make the register available for inspection by the general public (no fee).
- 7.4.5 Regulation 98(3) provides that the Council **may** provide to a member of the public a copy of any part of the register, or document kept for the purposes of regulation 98(1), on payment of a fee fixed by the Council.
- 7.4.6 The Council will provide copies of documents kept for the purposes of its register where to do so would not constitute a copyright infringement.
- 7.4.7 Where a copyright infringement could arise, the Council will not provide copies of these documents, unless the person requesting such has obtained permission from the copyright owner, or otherwise has signed a statutory declaration to the effect that the owner of copyright cannot be located after reasonable enquiries have been made.
- 7.5 Inspection and copies of documents relating to approved developments:
- 7.5.1 In the case of applications that have been assessed and a decision made, regulation 101(1) obliges the Council to retain certain development application documents relating to approved building work only (i.e. not significant trees, land divisions or land uses). These documents include *“all technical details, particulars, plans, drawings, specifications and other documents or information relating to building work”*.
  - 7.5.2 Regulation 101(a1) requires the Council to retain a copy of each document provided to it by a private certifier in relation to any application for development plan consent assessed by the private certifier.
  - 7.5.3 Regulation 101(4)(a) provides that a person may inspect at the offices of the Council during its normal business hours any document retained by the Council under Regulation 101(a1) or 101(1), without charge. The Council is not required to make available for inspection any information if to do so would, in the opinion of the Council, unreasonably jeopardise the present or future security of a building, or constitute a breach of any other law.
  - 7.5.4 Regulation 101(4)(b) provides that a person may, on payment of a reasonable fee fixed by the Council, obtain a copy of any document retained by the Council under Regulation 101(a1) or 101(1).

- 7.5.5 The obligation set out in 7.5.4 is subject to exceptions set out in Regulation 105(b). Copies are not required to be provided where copying of a document would in the opinion of the Council, unreasonably jeopardise the present or future security of a building; involve an infringement of copyright in matter contained in a document; or constitute a breach of any other law.
- 7.5.6 Where a person does not have permission from the owner of copyright in plans and other documents held by the Council under Regulation 101(a1) or 101(1), the Council is not obliged to provide a copy of that document to that person
- 7.5.7 In recognition of the practical need for copies of such documents to be provided in certain situations, and taking into account copyright considerations, the Council will provide copies where the person requesting the copies:
- 7.5.7.1 is the owner of copyright in the documents;
  - 7.5.7.2 is the current owner of the building;
  - 7.5.7.3 is the applicant who obtained development authorisation of the building; or
  - 7.5.7.4 has obtained a written permission from the owner of copyright in the document for it to be reproduced.
- 7.5.8 Regulation 101(3) of the *Development Regulations 2008* provides that the Council may, in relation to Class 1 and 10 buildings, after 10 years of the date of approval offer the plans and specifications to the owner of the building (and destroy the documents if the offer is not accepted). Notwithstanding this, there is a non-legally binding agreement across local government that plans will only be destroyed once the relevant building is demolished. Council hereby adopts that position as a matter of policy.
- 7.5.9 The Council has a medium term goal of moving its development assessment function to an electronic format. This will, at the least, cap hard copy file storage costs. Depending on budget, this process may include back scanning of development files.
- 7.5.10 It is proposed that in the future, in relation to any files that are available in a permanent electronic record, Council will offer such files to the owner of the building pursuant to Regulation 101(3).
- 7.5.11 Council will address the matter of offering plans and specifications that are not in electronic form, pursuant to Regulation 101(3), prior to any decision being made or instructions being given to destroy the said documents.

## 8. Freedom of Information Act 1991

- 8.1 Applications for disclosure of development application documents may be made pursuant to the *Freedom of Information Act*.
- 8.2 According to section 13(f) of the *Freedom of Information Act*, applicants may request that access to Council documents be given to them in a particular way.

- 8.3 According to section 20(1)(b) of the *Freedom of Information Act*, the Council may refuse to grant access to documents the subject of an application under this Act if the documents are available for inspection by the Council or another agency – e.g. a State Government department – or if they are available for inspection through a separate process under another Act.
- 8.4 For instance, where development application documents are made available for inspection during the public notification period under Regulation 34 of the Development Regulations, the Council may refuse access to those documents requested under the *Freedom of Information Act*. For more information on when development application documents are made publicly available, see clause 7 of this Policy.
- 8.5 Section 22(1) of the *Freedom of Information Act* provides that access to Council documents may be given via various means, including by giving the applicant a copy of the document.
- 8.6 However, section 22(2)(c) of the *Freedom of Information Act* provides that where an applicant has requested that a copy of a document be provided to them, an alternative form of access may be given where providing a copy would involve an infringement of copyright in matter contained in the document.
- 8.7 This means that the Council cannot lawfully reproduce works subject to copyright for the purpose of providing access under the *Freedom of Information Act* without the prior permission of the copyright owner.
- 8.8 In order to avoid infringing copyright, the Council may consider providing access to but not copies of copyright-protected documents under the *Freedom of Information Act* by way of inspection.
- However, if;
- 8.8.1 the applicant is the owner of copyright in those documents; or
  - 8.8.2 the applicant has obtained the permission of the owner of copyright in those documents to have them copied; or
  - 8.8.3 where the applicant has attempted to locate the owner of copyright, but has not been successful, the applicant signs a statutory declaration to this effect,
- copies of copyright material may be provided.
- 8.9 In accordance with the FOI Act, access to and copies of documents will not be provided by Council where there is a risk to the security of a person, building, structure or vehicle.

## 9. State Records Act 1997

- 9.1 Under this Act, the Council has an obligation to maintain official records in its custody in good order and condition. This obligation applies not only to the capture, storage, maintenance and disposal of physical records, but also to records in electronic format.
- 9.2 An official record is defined in section 3 of the Act to mean a record made or received by the Council *in the conduct of its business*. This means that, because Council Members and staff of the Council variously act as representatives of the Council, any record created, sent, received, forwarded or transmitted by Council



staff and/or Council Members in the performance and discharge of their functions and duties may be classified as an official record.

- 9.3 In order to ensure that official records are kept in safe custody in accordance with the requirements of the *State Records Act*, the Council may cause reproductions of works to be made, including electronic copies ("scans") of documents to be saved in its internal records management systems, and may create additional hard copies of documents, where appropriate. Where an official record is reproduced into an Electronic Document Records System, the original may be destroyed in accordance with General Disposal Schedule 21.
- 9.4 The reproductions of works for records management purposes should only be made available to the general public where the original no longer exists. In certain circumstances original works which are digitised (scanned) may be destroyed.
- 9.5 *General Disposal Schedule 21: For management and disposal of source documents and digitised versions after digitisation and the accompanying Digitisation of Official Records and Management of Source Documents Guideline* establish the criteria for enabling the destruction of source documents. Both GDS21 and the Guideline are available from [www.archives.sa.gov.au](http://www.archives.sa.gov.au).

## 10. Availability

- 10.1 The Policy is available to be downloaded, free of charge, from Council's website [www.burnside.sa.gov.au](http://www.burnside.sa.gov.au)
- 10.2 The Policy will be available for inspection without charge at the Civic Centre during ordinary business hours and a copy may be purchased at a fee set annually by Council.

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