#### **River Torrens Source Sheet No. 21**

Named in 1836 by Colonel Light after Robert Torrens, Chairman of the Colonisation Commission which promoted settlement of South Australia, the River remained at first a narrow stream, prone to flooding in winter, from which Adelaide got its first supply of water and sand for building, and into which most of the City’s effluent was discharged. The control of the River within the City’s boundaries was vested in the Council by the River Torrens Improvement Act, 1869-70. The Act empowered the Council to construct a dam across the River so as to create an ornamental lake for the purpose of public recreation. The Torrens Weir was built and the Torrens Lake opened in 1881. Elder Park and the banks of the River were landscaped, and a series of by-laws proclaimed by the Council regulating boating, swimming, and other activities in the vicinity of the Lake. In 1928 floodgates were installed at the Weir in an attempt to overcome problems of flooding and silt build-up in the Lake. The two shallow lakes west of the Weir were constructed in 1960, while the Weir Restaurant was opened in 1961.

**Archival Sources**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Record Description** | **Date Range** | **Accession Number(s)** |
| Master Index [to Town Clerk’s Dockets and Special Files] | c1930 - 1976 | 2426 |
| Town Clerk’s Department Dockets | 1856 - 1976 | 2530 |
| Town Clerk’s Letters Received Books | 1862 - 1976 | 4182 |
| Index of Town Clerk’s Letters Received | 1856 - 1973 | 4183 |
| Town Clerk’s Department Letter Books – General | 1853 - 1924 | 602 |
| Town Clerk’s Special File 14 ‘Dredge at Torrens Lake’ | 1906 - 1909 | 352 |
| Town Clerk’s Special File 15 and 152 ‘Torrens Lake Improvements’ | 1907 - 1950 | 352 |
| Town Clerk’s Special File 95 ‘Floodgates – Torrens Lake’ | 1917 - 1970 | 352 |
| Town Clerk’s Special File 101 ‘Pleasure Barge – Torrens Lake’ | 1923 - 1933 | 352 |
| Town Clerk’s Special File 393 ‘Pinky Flat – Improvement Torrens – North Side’ | 1953 - 1968 | 352 |
| Town Clerk’s Special File 414 ‘Fountain – Torrens Lake’ | 1950 - 1975 | 352 |
| Town Clerk’s Special File 430 ‘Torrens Sheet Piling - Beautification ‘ | 1948 - 1965 | 352 |
| Town Clerk’s Special Files 411 and 477 ‘Shallow Lakes Below Weir / Torrens Weir Restaurant’ | 1958 - 1976 | 352 |
| Town Clerk’s Special File 517 ‘Erosion of Torrens Banks’ | 1956 - 1976 | 352 |
| Town Clerk’s Department Newspaper Clippings – General | 1898 - 1971 | 283 |
| City Engineer’s Dockets | c1902 - 1979 | 438, 735, 825, 2354, 3080, 4612, 4874 |
| City Engineer’s Documented Index | 1902 - 1970 |  |
| City Engineer’s File 18/60 ‘Torrens Weir Restaurant’ | c1960 - 1962 | 3762 |
| City Engineer’s Plan Register | c1881 - 1951 | 4520 |
| Microfilm (Aperture) Plan Records - City Engineer’s Department | c1880 - 1972 | 3935 |
| City Engineer’s Photo Albums ‘Torrens Lake’ | c1960 | 3261/30 |
| Torrens Lake Dredge Log Book | 1932 - 1938 | 2839 |
| Torrens Weir Sluice Gates and Flood Records | 1889 - 1981 | 2838, 4933 |
| Register of Licensed Private Boats, Boatmen and Rents for the Torrens Lake | 1882 - 1893 | 2113 |
| Parks and Recreation File 41/304 ‘Regatta Programmes’ | 1958 - 1964 | 2905 |
| Parks and Recreation File 41/414 ‘Popeye and Paddle Boats, Elder Park’ | 1948 - 1975 | 2905 |
| Plan [proposed improvements to Lake banks between Adelaide and Albert Bridges] | 1936 | 1876/3 |
| Plans of Parks Around River Torrens | 1916 - 1960 | 1114/1 - 5 |
| Commercial Department Photographs | c1960s | 3554 |
| Historical Pictorial Collection | 1850 - 1970 | S59, 1461, 3016, 5531 |
| Town Clerk’s Lantern Slides Collection | 1860 - 1940 | 4351 |

**Other sources**

See the annual Mayors and Corporation Reports and Council Digests of Proceedings c1870- . For early material c1850-1870 (which includes reports of the Conservator of the River Torrens) see the **List of Earliest Corporation Records**.Information on construction of the Weir and Lake can be found in Peter Morton,***After Light. A History of the City of Adelaide and its Council 1878-1928*** (Wakefield Press, 1996). See also Patricia Summerling, ***Adelaide’s Park Lands*** (Wakefield Press, 2011).

**Further Information**

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