#### **City Archives Key Holdings Source Sheet No. 47**

The Archives now has custody of more than 6,000 shelf-metres of records. Besides the usual masses of old files, volumes, dockets, photographs, maps and plans, there’s also more recent stuff like computer discs, printouts, microfilms and audio and digital back-up tapes. Provided it’s less than 30 years old and in reasonable physical condition, all this material is able be made available for research purposes.

Among the most interesting and informative records in the Council’s collection are:

***Earliest Corporation Records***

The bulk of these records are from the 1850s and 1860s. They comprise bundles of annual correspondence received by the City Council about a host of municipal matters, lots of early tenders and contracts for civic works, memorials and agreements, employment applications, and reports of early Council officials like the Inspector of Weights and Measures, the Inspector of Nuisances and the Conservator of the River Torrens. A priceless collection of old documents which are mostly in remarkably good condition for their age.

***City of Adelaide Assessment Books***

These huge books were rate records of City properties, produced annually from 1847. They can help researchers find out the age and use of properties, and the names of their occupants and owners - and whether they paid their rates on time.

***Annual Reports***

An invaluable source of information about the history and development of the City. They summarise the activities and achievements of the Council from 1878, and include reports by the (Lord) Mayor, Town Clerk and each of the Council’s chief administrative officers. They’re literally full of interesting facts and figures.

***Council Minutes***

Not as dreary as they sound. These are held from 1840 and consist of the minutes of meetings of the City Council and Local Board of Health. More importantly, they contain detailed reports of the various Council Committees which dealt with the day-to-day administration of the City. Early volumes are hand-written in the finest copper plate script. They provide a wealth of information about the City’s history.

***Citizens’ Rolls***

Annual lists of persons entitled to vote in municipal elections. To qualify citizens had to either own or occupy property within the City, and this included women. The earliest Roll is for 1852-53. An invaluable source for family historians.

***Municipal Year Books***

Year Books were published annually from 1911 until 1974. They are a short guide to the Council and the City, containing information about many municipal services and amenities, the Park Lands, streets and statues, and prominent public buildings. Really fascinating little books.

***Town Clerk’s Records***

These include correspondence, files and newspaper cuttings of the old Town Clerk’s Department, 1852 to 1982, together with records relating to inspection and licensing, parks and gardens and public health. A vast, and as yet largely under utilised source of historic information about anything to do with the City and its Council.

***City Engineer’s Records***

Consist of correspondence, files and other records, 1852 to 1982, relating to planning, construction, and maintenance of streets, squares, drains, and bridges, including engineering drawings. There’s also the Smith Survey, which shows details of City buildings in 1880. Another mostly untapped mine of information about the City’s development.

***Licensing Records***

At one time or another the Council seems to have licensed just about anything and everything within the City - lodging houses, private hospitals, places of public entertainment, taxi-cab owners, street hawkers, milk vendors, street musicians, newspaper vendors, motor car drivers, boot blacks, even cow keepers - you name it, the Council most likely licensed it. Needless to say, the records of the City Inspector’s Office, 1854 to 1973, are replete with details of this business and how it was administered. Some fascinating stuff among this lot.

***Health Records***

There’s a lot of data in these with information about the health of the City’s population from 1873 contained in such records as the City of Adelaide health returns, Health Inspectors’ reports, records of bacteriological examinations and visits by the Medical Officer of Health and Trained Nurse to premises occupied by sufferers of infectious diseases, registers of patients sent to the Adelaide and Northfield Hospitals and, from 1944, records of the Council’s Social Worker.

***Parks and Gardens Records***

Records relating to the laying out, landscaping, planting and maintenance of the City’s parks and gardens from 1856, including reports of the City Gardener and Park Lands Ranger. There’s even records of applicants for permits to depasture sheep and cattle on the Park Lands.

***City Building Plans***

Copies of plans of building work in the City, including alterations and additions, submitted to the Council for approval are held from the early 1900s. Tens of thousands of plans of houses, businesses, offices, hotels, factories, warehouses and other City properties are available. This is a unique collection indeed, as most other metropolitan Councils threw their early building application plans away long ago.

***Historic Photographs***

These date from about 1860, with the bulk of the collection being from around the turn of the century to the mid-1960s. They include views of City streets and buildings, parks and people, and various civic events such as Royal visits and Mayoral garden parties. There is also a large collection of engineering photos. Copies are much in demand.

**Further Information**

**City Archives:** Topham Mall, off Currie and Waymouth Streets, Adelaide 5000

**Counter / telephone enquiries:** 9**.**00 am to 5.00 pm Monday to Friday

**Search Room open for public research:**10.00 am to 4.00 pm Tuesday to Thursday

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