

CONSERVATION GRANTS POLICY

Policy Type:	Council Policy
Responsible Department:	City Services
Responsible Officer:	Manager Development & Regulatory Services
Related Policies and Procedures	N/A
Community Plan Link	<i>Environmental Stewardship</i> 2.1 Unley's urban forest is maintained and improved.
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1. PREAMBLE

- 1.1. Unley's vision is to become the 'City of Villages'; proud of its history, built character, landscaped environment and community well-being while ensuring sustainability into the future by responding to the need and expectations for change. The important valued features need to be retained and conserved to provide the context and foundation to build upon.
- 1.2. Unley's history, and built and natural character, are reflected in the extensive presence of early buildings and mature landscaping. The most notable examples have been specifically recognised by designation as heritage places, representative buildings within historic overlays and regulated and significant trees to ensure their protection.
- 1.3. Retention, care and pride are generally evident in these features by owners, but they are also often appreciated by the wider community for their contribution to Unley's unique character. Appropriate maintenance can sometimes involve greater or ongoing costs. Council acknowledges their special recognition and value to the community by offering additional support, including the Conservation Funds to subsidise conservation advice and work, together with other initiatives.
- 1.4. The Council operates an annual budget and review of allocations for the State and Local Heritage Places, representative buildings as well as Regulated and Significant Trees Conservation Funds. The provision of subsidies in accordance with the procedures detailed in this policy are dependent upon the Council's budget at any given time, and the availability of funds.

- 1.5. A clear and comprehensive framework and set of procedures is required to manage the Conservation Funds, guide eligibility for assistance and manage associated resources fairly, responsibly and effectively.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1. The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for the application and operation of a Conservation Grant program established to encourage and assist with the appropriate maintenance of the City's private heritage places, representative buildings and regulated or significant trees.
- 2.2. The Conservation Grants complement other initiatives operated by Unley Council for many years including the free Heritage Advisory service.

3. POLICY PURPOSE/OBJECTIVES

- 3.1. The policy aims to:

- support Council's vision, strategic plans and policies for preservation of the City's heritage places, representative buildings and regulated and significant trees;
- encourage and assist private owners to manage recognised valued buildings and trees by subsidising the conservation of the long term heritage value of the place and its contribution to historic streetscape character;
- encourage and assist private owners to manage regulated and significant trees by subsidising their management or maintenance in a safe, sound and aesthetically pleasing condition;
- complement other support initiatives;
- provide a clear framework for the operation of the Conservation Funds in an equitable, transparent and accountable manner.

4. DEFINITIONS

- 4.1. **Regulated Tree** has the same meaning and criteria as are currently applicable under the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016* and associated Regulations, as amended.

This means having a trunk circumference of two (2) metres or more – or, in the case of trees with multiple trunks, a total circumference of two (2) metres or more and an average circumference of 625mm or more – measured one metre above natural ground level.

- 4.2. **Significant Tree** has the same meaning and criteria as are currently applicable under the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016* and associated Regulations, as amended.

This means having a trunk circumference of three (3) metres or more – or, in the case of trees with multiple trunks, a total circumference of three (3) metres or more and an average circumference of 625mm or more – measured one metre above natural ground level. Significant Trees that are identified as declared trees under Part 10 of the Planning and Design Code are also eligible for consideration under this policy.

- 4.3. **State Heritage Place** means State Heritage Places as identified in the State Heritage Overlay of the Planning and Design Code.

- 4.4. **Local Heritage Place** means Local Heritage Places as identified in Part 11 of the Planning and Design Code.
- 4.5. **Representative Building** means representative buildings as identified in the Historic Area Statements and Character Area Statements of the Planning and Design Code.
- 4.6. **Privately owned** means not in government ownership i.e. residents, businesses, incorporated bodies etc. are all considered to be “private owners” for the purposes of this policy.

5. POLICY STATEMENT

5.1. Eligibility

- 5.1.1. Conservation grants may be considered in relation to regulated trees, significant trees or state and local heritage places, or representative buildings.
- 5.1.2. A regulated tree, significant tree heritage place or representative building that is the subject of an application for conservation funding must be situated within the City of Unley.
- 5.1.3. Applications will be accepted only from the owner(s) of a regulated or significant tree/place/item.
- 5.1.4. Where a tree is exempt from being classified as a significant or regulated tree under 3F (4)(a) of the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure (General) Regulations 2016* by virtue of the location of the tree being less than 10 metres from a dwelling or in-ground swimming pool, this Policy shall still apply.
- 5.1.5. Where development approval is required for works associated with a grant application, development approval must be obtained prior to the grant being approved by Council.
- 5.1.6. Properties that have previously received the maximum available funding will not be eligible to apply for funds for a period of:
- 5.1.6.1. In the case of building work - five (5) years from the date that the maximum amount of funds has been received.
- 5.1.6.2. In the case of regulated or significant tree pruning – three (3) years from the date that the maximum amount of funds has been received.
- 5.1.7. Work that has already commenced will not be eligible for funding assistance unless the work has been undertaken for urgent structural reasons and advice has been sought from a Council officer prior to undertaking the work.
- 5.1.8. Where other grant funding has been obtained for the proposed works, the Conservation Grant Policy will not apply.

5.2. What types of projects will be considered

- 5.2.1. The following types of projects will be considered, provided that as much of the original building fabric as possible is retained:
- external structural repairs;
 - conservation works to the exterior of the building, including those that restore, conserve, enhance or reinstate heritage features to the front facade, walls, verandah, windows and/or roof of the building including:

- (i) re-pointing or repair of stonework;
 - (ii) removal of non-original paint and/or plaster;
 - (iii) painting external timber elements;
 - (iv) salt damp treatment; and
- - repairs to or reinstatement of original front fencing based on historic or archival records or side and/or rear fencing if such fencing is specifically listed as part of a Local Heritage Place.
 - Pruning to a significant or regulated tree.

5.3. What the Grant Scheme does not cover

5.3.1. Applications for the following works will not be considered:

- buildings owned or leased by a Council or Government Agency;
- conservation work with a value of less than \$1,000;
- work already commenced or previously completed, except in instances where emergency repair work is required, at the discretion of Council;
- routine maintenance such as termite treatment, pest control;
- electrical or plumbing work (unless it relates directly to improving the building's structural soundness or public appearance);
- internal works (unless required for structural stability of the building);
- side or rear boundary fencing (unless such fencing is specifically listed as part of a State or Local Heritage Place);
- the purchase of a building or site;
- construction of additions or outbuildings;
- relocation of a heritage building.

5.4. Information to be provided

5.4.1. Heritage Place or Representative Building

- Detailed description of the work
- Site plan identifying the location of the work
- Detailed drawings or photos as necessary to clearly define the scope of work
- Relevant plans and specifications prepared by suitable person or company
- Photos of relevant part of building
- Methodology or specification notes to detail the materials and techniques to undertake the works
- Two written quotes from suitable persons or companies based on the agreed scope of works

5.4.2. Regulated or Significant Tree

- Expert or technical report from a qualified arborist on the maintenance pruning proposed
- Two quotes from tree pruners
- Recent photos of the proposed maintenance pruning required

Applications that are submitted and not accompanied by the appropriate level of documentation (as detailed above) will be considered ineligible and will be returned to the applicant.

5.5. Grant Conditions

5.5.1. Grants are available only for the costs of:

- expert advice,
- conservation and restoration of heritage places or representative buildings to conserve original elements or reinstate the original appearance and the maintenance
- management of eligible trees.

All conservation work funded by a Council grant must be undertaken by suitably qualified and licensed contractors. Funding is not available for the removal of trees or for inappropriate lopping, pruning or “tree damaging activity” as defined by the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016*.

- 5.5.2. Any liabilities arising from conservation work that is financially supported by the Council shall attach to the grant recipient and not to the Council.
- 5.5.3. All trees/places/items which are the subject of applications for conservation funds must be assessed by suitably qualified specialists in the relevant field, that is;

- (i) an arboriculturalist for a tree; or
- (ii) an architect/contractor specialising in building conservation for a building.

The reports of such assessments must be made available to the Council and its delegates to assist in allocating grants.

- 5.5.4. Conservation grants are available for up to 50% of the total cost of a single grant application:
- (i) of a regulated or significant tree up to a maximum amount of \$1,000 per application; and
 - (ii) of a heritage place and/or representative building up to a maximum of \$5,000.

Where the scope of the conservation work or the circumstances of the applicant warrant further consideration outside this framework, the request may be presented to the Council for determination of any special merit for additional funding.

- 5.5.5. A successful applicant must sign an agreement setting out the terms of a conservation grant which must include a time limit for the completion of any works funded with Council’s assistance within the financial year that the grant was provided.
- 5.5.6. When a conservation grant is made, the applicant must accept the Council’s right to photograph the subject trees, property and/or items, before and after conservation work. The applicant must also provide Council with photographic documentation of building work prior to and after completion.
- 5.5.7. Grants will be provided only while conservation funds remain in the budget allocated by Council for the relevant financial year.
- 5.5.8. Payment of grants is to be made only following inspection of the satisfactorily completed conservation work, by a Council officer. Grant recipients are to provide receipts and detailed invoices before payment is made. Where residents have particular cash flow difficulties, some provision may be made with the approval of the relevant senior manager. The Council preserves the right to withhold payment of allocated grants if conservation work does not meet appropriate standards and/or differs from the work that was proposed in the application.

5.6. Assessment of Applications

5.6.1. Council will allocate funding to applications as per the Policy based on the merits of the application to assist in preserving the City's heritage places, representative buildings and regulated and significant trees.

5.6.2. Weighting shall be applied to all applications based on the following evaluation table:

Priority Weighting	Conservation Grant Application Type
1 – 40%	Significant Tree Pruning
2 – 25%	Regulated Tree Pruning
3 – 20%	Local Heritage Place building works
4 – 10%	State Heritage Place building works
5 – 5%	Representative Buildings building works

5.6.3. Funding under this Policy shall be assessed based on the priority listing in 5.6.2 and the merits of the application against the eligible works proposed in 5.2.

5.6.4. Funds can be allocated to lower priority weightings where merit is displayed against the eligibility as defined in 5.2 for the proposed works. Any such funds would be allocated in priority order.

5.7. Administration

5.7.1. The Council Administration will receive and assess applications in accordance with this Policy, and make recommendations for the Council's consideration on the allocation of grants. The Administration will oversee the inspection of conservation work which is assisted by the Council through this funding scheme.

5.7.2. The availability of conservation funds (when allocated in the Council's budget) is to be advertised to the community as soon as practicable following the declaration of the budget and again, later in the financial year, if funds remain unallocated.

6. POLICY DELEGATIONS

6.1. The Manager Development and Regulatory is delegated to approve partial payments of allocated funding prior to completion of works where the applicant has provided information relating to cash flow issues in order to complete the approved scope of works.

7. LEGISLATION

- *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016 and associated Regulations*

8. AVAILABILITY OF POLICY

8.1. The Policy is available for viewing, download and printing free of charge from the Council's website www.unley.sa.gov.au

9. DOCUMENT HISTORY

Date	Ref/Version No.	Comment
23 Aug 2004	C397/04: V1	
22 Nov 2004	C476/04: V2	
24 May 2010	C665/10: V3	
28 May 2012	C420/12: V4	
24 Oct 2016	C633/16: V5	
26 Aug 2019	C0117/19: V6	
23 Aug 2021	C0579/21: V7	Changes required due to transition to Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act