

# BUILDING OVER COUNCIL'S UNDERGROUND SERVICES POLICY



**Responsible Department:** Infrastructure Delivery  
**Responsible Section:** Water Services  
**Responsible Officer:** Manager Water Services

## Objective

The implementation of this policy will ensure that Council's underground services (i.e. water, sewer and stormwater assets) are protected, from damage or loss of access that could be caused as a result of construction works.

This policy is aimed at avoiding:-

- Structural damage to the water and sewerage pipes, as a result of the load from the structure being transferred to the underground service. This may cause the pipes to subside or fracture.
- Subsidence with consequent damage to the structure. Subsidence can occur when a pipeline breaks and the resultant flow of water reduces the bearing capacity of the surrounding soils.
- Barriers to access to manhole, maintenance shafts and inspection shafts, and the underground service.
- Future costs that could be incurred by having to remove and then replace structures that have been allowed to be built over or too close to underground services.
- An inconsistent approach to building over or near underground pipework throughout the Narrabri Shire Council area.

## Introduction

In order to protect Council's underground services (i.e. water, sewer and stormwater assets) within private property, the following policy has been developed.

As new developments are constructed within the Narrabri Shire Council area, problems can arise in trying to position the proposed buildings on allotments with adequate clearance to existing services. Unrestricted building of structures close to Council infrastructure can increase the probability of damage, restrict access to and increase the cost of maintenance and repair.

Some of Councils sewerage infrastructure is up to six metres deep at the rear of properties and this limits the scope of future development in these properties.

## **Policy**

Council's underground services (i.e. water, sewer and stormwater assets) are also referred to as a "main"

### **General**

1. Where a conflict may occur, the owner shall obtain survey data (prepared by a Registered Surveyor) to evaluate the relationship between the proposed building and Council's underground service. All costs are at the applicant's expense.
2. Where footings are to be supported by piers, the pier design shall be carried out and certified by a suitably qualified engineer. The design will need to prove that footings are able to bridge between the nominated pier spacing. All costs are at the applicant's expense.
3. Minor structures, (eg open awnings, pergolas and single carports), may be permitted as encroachments over mains, conditional to these structures being able to be dismantled at the applicant's expense.. Specific development approval is required in such instances.
4. Driveways and parking areas are permitted over mains.
5. In situations where the position of the main is seen to unduly encumber the building envelope, the owner may make special application to Council to realign the main. The applicant shall engage a suitably qualified engineer to design a new alignment to the satisfaction of Council's Director of Engineering Services. All costs are at the applicant's expense.
6. Concrete encasement of underground services will not be permitted.

### **Buildings and Structures**

1. No building or structure shall be designed to be closer than one (1) metre to the near side from any underground service (ie sewer, water main or stormwater pipe).
2. Where a main is less than 1.5 metres deep, a structure may be built to one (1) metre from the main providing the buildings footings are supported by piers to the invert level of the Council asset. The piers must support the footings for a distance away from the main equal to the depth of the main.
3. Where a main is more than 1.5 metres deep, a structure may be built no closer than two (2) metres from the near side of the main providing the buildings footings are supported by piers to the invert level of the main. The piers must support the footings for a distance away from the sewer main equal to the depth of the main.
4. A corner structure may be allowed to within 0.5 metres of a sewer/stormwater line if the corner is cantilevered on footings to meet the criteria above.

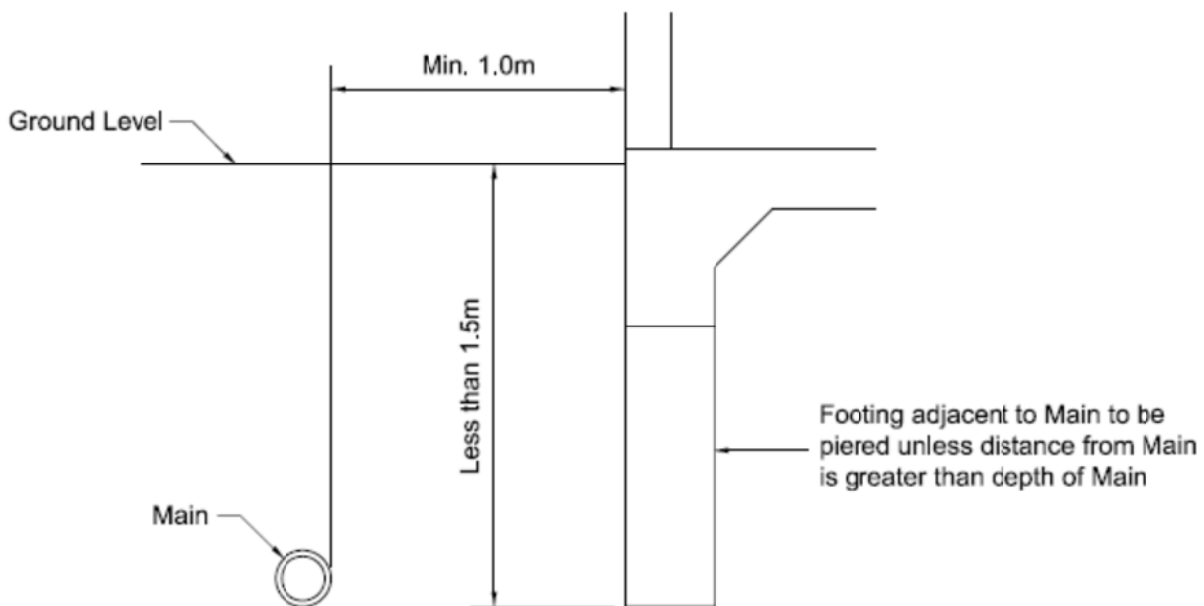
### **Pools**

1. Where it is proposed to build a pool in the vicinity of a main and the main is above the bottom level of the pool, the pool may be positioned no closer than one (1) metre from any main. Pool coping above the main is acceptable provided it is not structurally connected to the pool wall.

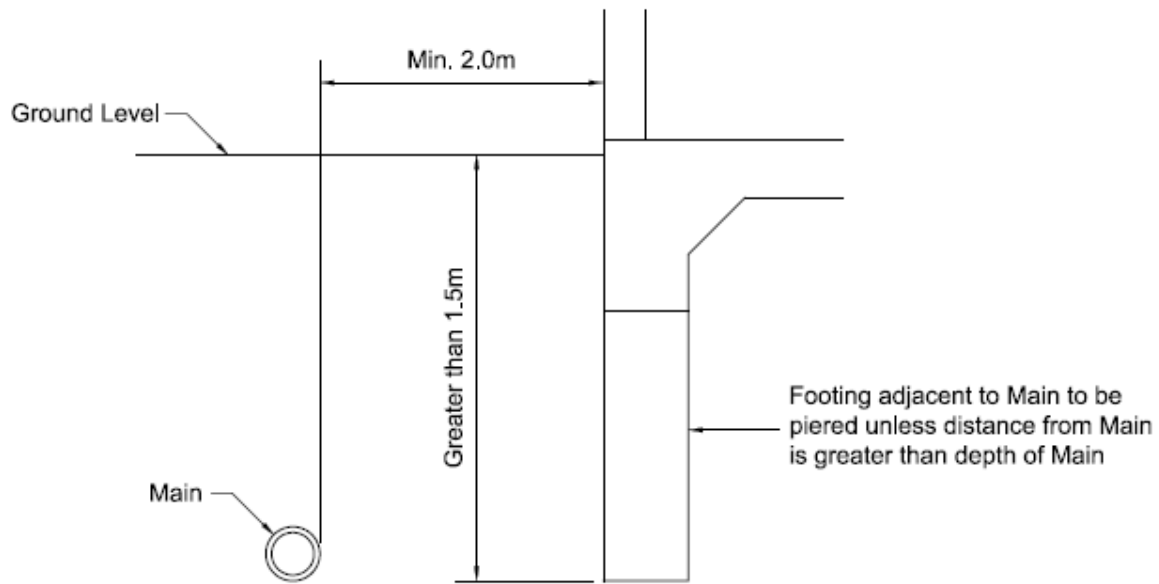
2. Where the main is below the bottom level of the pool a strip footing along the length of the pool adjacent to the main must be provided to transfer the pool load below the main. The footing must be supported by piers to the invert of the main. Similar to structures, allowable clearance between the main and the pool will vary with the depth of the main:-
  - Less than 1.5 metres deep – one (1) metre clearance.
  - More than 1.5 metres deep – two (2) metres clearance.

### Retaining Walls

1. Where a retaining wall is proposed to be constructed parallel to a main, the strip footing along the length of the retaining wall must be supported by concrete piers to the invert level of the asset. Similar to structures, allowable clearance between the main and the retaining wall will vary with the depth of the main:
  - Less than 1.5 metres deep – one (1) metre clearance.
  - More than 1.5 metres deep – two (2) metres clearance.
2. Where the retaining wall crosses the wall main the strip footings shall be constructed to bridge the main and be supported on concrete piers at least 1.0 metre from the sides of the main and to the invert of the main.



## Main less than 1.5m Deep



## Main greater than 1.5m Deep

### References

- Local Government Act, 1993.

### Measure of Success

- Measure by the adherence to the Policy and Procedure outlined in the Policy.

### History

MINUTE NUMBER	MEETING DATE	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE
852/2009	15 December 2009	Adopted
26/2012	21 February 2012	Reviewed
607/2013	3 September 2013	Reviewed