

OBTAINING COPIES OF GERS COLLECTION MATERIAL AT THE E.R.O.

This note has been prepared with the assistance of the Essex Record Office and Network Rail's Archivist so that researchers are aware of the constraints on copying certain plans and the way research material is presented in the Search Room.

The wording of this note has been agreed with Stephen Dixon, Archive Service Manager at the ERO, and his staff are aware of the clearance now given for copying Network Rail plans for private study.

Network Rail Plans (formerly Railtrack) (Material in the D/Z 346/3000, 5000 and 6000 series)

These plans remain the copyright of Network Rail. As part of the negotiations leading to the deposit of our collection at the ERO in 1998 one of our conditions was that all Railtrack plans were supplied to the Society on the distinct understanding that no reproduction is allowed except with their specific agreement.

This was done to demonstrate to Railtrack the sense of responsibility toward what has proved to be a unique archive.

In the meantime, Railtrack has been replaced by Network Rail, and the original archive – which was kept at Waterloo – has moved to York, although the staff have been dispersed elsewhere. The Society has therefore made a formal request to Network Rail to reiterate the arrangement, which has resulted in the following response:

“With regards to the Network Rail drawings that form part of the Great Eastern Railway Society's Collection, we are happy for the Essex Record Office to provide copies for personal research purposes.

If the drawings are to be used for publication or commercial use, please refer the enquirer to the Network Rail Corporate Archive, the contact details of which are as follows:”

Network Rail
National Records Centre
Audax Road
Clifton Moor
YORK YO30 4GS

NRGcorporatearchive@networkrail.co.uk

The guiding principal at the Essex Record Office is to safeguard the condition of all deposited and loaned material and this means that sometimes a request for a copy will be refused if the condition is judged to be fragile.

The assistants at the Search Room desk are not qualified archivists and will always err on the cautious side when copies are requested or out-of-the-ordinary requests are made. There is always a duty archivist available who should be approached for a formal decision on access or copyright.

The Network Rail plans are sometimes referred to as 'artistic works', a term used for all work which is separate from a published book. Whereas parts of published books, including illustrations, may be copied for private study, detached or free-standing plans cannot, and are in copyright for 70 years after creation. Thus it was necessary to obtain specific permission from Network Rail for copies of its plans to be made.

A frequent constraint for copying plans is their size, generally those that are too large to be accommodated on the A3 size platen of a photocopier. However, long plans may be laid on a table set aside for the purpose and images taken with a digital camera; at a charge of £10 per day.

Plans are usually produced in the Search Room one at a time to avoid them being mixed up, but this does not allow comparisons to be made between plans of the same place drawn at different periods. It is known that for some locations a box or tube may contain plans for a single location and it is a matter of phoning well in advance to explain the nature of research proposed so that the best arrangements can be agreed beforehand.

Any comparison between the copying policies of the Essex Record Office and The National Archives is invalid. The material at T.N.A. is Crown Copyright, and it therefore has complete control over how it is used. The charge of £10 per day to use a digital camera is an ERO decision. Most material at the ERO is subject to some form of copyright, and decisions have to be made on an individual basis.

Users of the archive at the Essex Record Office are urged, before visiting the Search Room, to discuss what they wish to consult, so that the ERO staff can have the right material ready, and so that time spent in the Search Room is used to best advantage.

You may find it useful to print these two pages so that it may be consulted whilst visiting the ERO.