

HERITAGE STANDARD FOR THE PORT ADELAIDE

STATE HERITAGE AREA

YourSAy Engagement Report (July 2025)



BACKGROUND

South Australia's current planning and development system became fully operational in March 2021 with all operations under the *Development Act 1993* being replaced by the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016*. The Planning and Design Code (the Code), which has replaced Development Plans across the state, is a single 'rule' book of planning policy for assessing development applications.

The 2021 planning reforms have strengthened the protections for State Heritage Areas (SHAs) by:

- Introducing a SHA Overlay that protects and manages the heritage values of SHAs by ensuring development within SHAs is managed in a way that maintains the heritage values. The SHA Overlay policies take precedence over any applicable Zone and general policies in the Code, and demolition control is maintained.
- The SHA overlay also:
 - formalises the role of Statements of Significance for SHAs and 'other relevant documents' (e.g. Heritage Standards) in the development assessment process.
 - provides the triggers for developments that must be referred to the Minister responsible for the administration of the *Heritage Places Act 1993* (the Minister).
- Empowering the Minister to direct decisions on referred development applications, i.e. the Minister may direct the planning authority to refuse the development application or impose conditions in the event the planning authority approves it (previously the Minister was only empowered to provide advice for the planning authority's regard).

INTRODUCTION

The Port Adelaide SHA has South Australia's most substantial and continuous group of colonial buildings and many of these buildings are linked to Port Adelaide's function as the state's major port. The area is of architectural and historical significance to South Australia.

The existing Guidelines for Development for the Mount Torrens SHA were reviewed and updated by the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) to ensure they:

- were fit for purpose;
- consistent with terminology in the Code; and
- reflect the Port Adelaide SHA's Statement of Heritage Significance.

The key changes in the Port Adelaide Heritage Standard included:

- updating the structure and terminology of the Heritage Standard, to mirror the structure of the SHA Overlay of the Code;
- strengthening language within the Heritage Standard to reflect its statutory status under the Code;
- clarifying the purpose of the Heritage Standard, as an assessment tool for Heritage South Australia's heritage architects/officers, as delegates of the Minister;
- including a detailed description of the heritage features of the Port Adelaide SHA, as a context for providing advice;
- describing the 'heritage values' of Port Adelaide SHA, to highlight what is of heritage significance; and
- revising guidance policy relating to materials, fencing and services (such as solar panels) to reflect current practices.

SUMMARY OF ENGAGEMENT

The draft Heritage Standard for the Port Adelaide SHA was released for public consultation on the YourSAy website from 14 October 2024 to 22 November 2024.

Key stakeholders were also engaged directly prior to the consultation period.

ENGAGEMENT METHODS

Meetings were held with the planners at Port Adelaide Enfield Council. Emails were also sent to the Port Adelaide Enfield Council, the South Australian Heritage Council (SAHC), key community groups and government authorities summarising the draft Heritage Standard and inviting people to comment via a YourSAy engagement survey or by writing directly to DEW.

The public consultation was also promoted via Port Adelaide Enfield Council, PlanSA and DEW websites, newsletters and social media. Articles on the Port Adelaide Heritage Standard YourSAy consultation were featured on Architecture, Au and InDaily.

To support property owners, residents and others to understand the draft Port Adelaide Heritage Standard and to support them making a submission, if they desired, DEW offered the opportunity for them to talk face-to-face with DEW officers about the draft Heritage Standard.

ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

FORM OF FEEDBACK	NO. OF RESPONSES
YourSAy on-line survey	14 respondents
Responses to Question 12 in the YourSAy on-line survey: <i>What is the most important aspect of Port Adelaide's heritage for you?</i>	14 responses
Responses to Question 13 in the YourSAy on-line survey: <i>Do you have any other comments on the Heritage Standard for the Port Adelaide State Heritage Area?</i>	14 responses
Emailed submissions (sent directly to Heritage South Australia, DEW)	1 submission from the Port Adelaide Enfield Council
Face-to-face sessions	No face-to-face sessions were attended by members of the public (13 sessions were available)

WHAT WE HEARD AND HOW WE RESPONDED

GENERAL COMMENTS

A large number of general comments were provided that were not directly related to the Heritage Standard, but rather addressing the Port Adelaide SHA more broadly. These general comments, and responses to YourSAy survey question 12 and 13:

- “What is the most important aspect of Port Adelaide’s heritage for you?” and,
- “Do you have any other comments on the Heritage Standard for the Port Adelaide State Heritage Area?”,

have been summarised by theme and are presented below.

What We Heard

Expansion and Protection of the State Heritage Area

- Strong support for expanding the Port Adelaide SHA to include additional surrounding streets, buildings, and precincts.
- Calls for inclusion of specific areas such as the old warehouse district, south side of St Vincent Street, and west side of Commercial Road into the SHA.
- Residents outside the current boundary advocate for broader protection of Port Adelaide’s heritage and an expansion of the boundaries of the Port Adelaide SHA.

Preservation and Adaptive Reuse of Heritage Buildings

- Opposition to the demolition of historic wharf buildings and a preference for adaptive reuse of buildings was expressed by respondents, with some using other port cities, such as Hobart in Tasmania and Bristol in the United Kingdom, as examples of how to do this effectively.
- Respondents commented that sites such as the Hart Street Precinct, wharf sheds, and Old Sailing Club should be preserved for community use.
- Some comments emphasised retaining public ownership and resisting private development of heritage assets.
- Some respondents expressed concerns about loss of character due to inappropriate new developments.

Strengthening Heritage Standards and Regulations

- Feedback received included that the Heritage Standard needs to be stricter and better enforced to preserve historical value for future generations.
- Comments noted that without appropriate controls in place, there is a risk that the painting of external surfaces of buildings (where painted previously) within the SHA will occur that is not consistent with Planning and Design Code criteria and the Heritage Standard.
- Concerns were raised about the neglect of Port Adelaide’s heritage, with a need for more visible historical recognition through signage.
- Industrial pollution was also seen as a threat to the heritage values of the SHA by some respondents.

Economic and Community Benefits of Heritage Conservation

- Respondents noted that preserving heritage supports local identity, tourism, and business growth, particularly in hospitality.
- Heritage conservation was seen as a way to boost the perception of Port Adelaide as a historical and cultural hub.
- Support for new development that complements the heritage character through traditional design and a walkable variety of shopfronts was expressed.

Accessibility and Inclusion

- Respondents highlighted the need for all buildings to meet *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* standards.
- Comments also noted that accessibility should not be overlooked and that many heritage buildings are currently not inclusive.
- Suggestions included the need for inclusive consultation processes and grant support for accessibility improvements.

- There were also comments that footpaths, parking, and public buildings in the SHA must be upgraded for universal access.

Other Comments

- Review of the western boundary of the SHA (especially near Robe Street) is needed to clarify development controls.
- General support expressed for heritage protections as a means to enhance Port Adelaide's unique character.

How We Responded

Expansion and Protection of the State Heritage Area

- DEW notes the request to review the boundaries of the SHA and acknowledges the support for the expansion of the SHA; however, boundary changes are reviewed separately from the Heritage Standard and are outside the scope of this document.
- DEW acknowledges the recommendations for specific places in Port Adelaide to be listed as State Heritage Places. While this is outside the scope of this document, an individual can nominate places for State heritage listing. To nominate a place for State heritage listing, visit the Department for Environment and Water website: [Nominating a heritage place](#) for more information.
- DEW has, and will continue to, work with the Port Adelaide Enfield Council on a number of surveys to identify heritage buildings in the SHA and the wider council area.

Preservation and Adaptive Reuse of Heritage Buildings

- The Heritage Standard does not support the demolition of buildings of heritage value in the SHA.
- The Heritage Standard supports the adaptive reuse of heritage buildings.
- DEW notes the suggestion regarding keeping heritage places in public ownership, however restricting the sale of properties in the SHA is not within the scope of the Heritage Standard.
- DEW acknowledges the respondents concerns regarding the loss of character due to new development and notes that the Heritage Standard aims to preserve the streetscape and character of the SHA while allowing for new buildings to complement the heritage setting.

Strengthening Heritage Standards and Regulations

- DEW appreciates the feedback that the Heritage Standard needs to be stricter and better enforced and notes that the Heritage Standard supports the heritage by providing clear guidance for development and conservation within the scope of the Heritage Places Act and the Planning and Design Code. DEW also works with the City of Port Adelaide Enfield to protect the heritage values of the SHA.
- DEW affirms that an exemption for murals should not be included in the Planning Regulations and will raise this issue when the regulations are next open for amendment. The section on signage in the Heritage Standard has been updated to address mural painting. Similarly, existing painted signs of heritage value on masonry walls have been included as features of heritage significance.
- Concerns around inappropriate developments, industrial pollution and public signage are noted and while these matters are outside the scope of the Heritage Standard, all feedback is valued and will be raised with the appropriate authorities where possible.

Economic and Community Benefits of Heritage Conservation

- Comments highlighting the importance of heritage in supporting tourism, promoting a local identity and encouraging business growth are all acknowledged. The Heritage Standard's core purpose is to protect the SHA's heritage values for long-term benefit and community identity.
- Similarly, the Heritage Standard aims to protect the heritage values of the SHA to ensure it remains protected for future generations. This includes making sure new development align with the heritage values of the SHA.

Accessibility and Inclusion

- Accessibility is guided by national building regulations and legislation and the Heritage Standard does not cover disability access. However, DEW supports efforts that improve equitable access while upholding the heritage values of the SHA.
- DEW recognises the importance of inclusive access and will continue to work cooperatively with stakeholders on a case-

by-case basis.

Other comments

- Feedback and support expressed for heritage protections is noted and appreciated. While some issues, such as boundary adjustments, fall outside the current project scope, there is potential for them to inform future planning work and DEW will continue to work with the City of Port Adelaide Enfield to work to address these issues.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

The following comments are specific and technical in nature:

1. Background

What We Heard

- *'Regarding page 4, (City of Port Adelaide Enfield) staff suggest that 2. Statement of Significance can be changed to 2, Heritage Value to be consistent with the Table of Contents (page 2) and the main heading on page 13.'*
- *'It is suggested that the header at the top of Section 1 (page 3 to 12) should read 'Heritage Standards – Background' in lieu of 'Heritage Standards – Heritage Value.'*
- *'The suggestion is provided by the City of Port Adelaide Enfield.'*

How We Responded

The Heritage Standard has been revised in response to these comments.

2. Heritage Value

Section 2.1 –Statement of Significance (Port Adelaide State Heritage Area)

No comments provided.

Section 2.2 – What is of heritage significance?

What We Heard

- *'In relation to Subsection (f) raised streets in parts of the State Heritage Area have resulted in buildings with original ground floor levels now below street level (p. 15) will there be an image inserted?'*
- *'Staff note the misalignment of text beneath some images and absence of text beneath some images (pages 13-21). Acknowledged this may be a work in progress.'*
- *'Alternative photograph suggested for 'single pitch verandahs across the footpath' on page 18 showing St Vincent Street streetscape and verandahs (current left-hand side, photo shows side view of a building with cantilevered balcony) '*
- *'Alternative photo suggested for upper storey cantilevered decorative balconies (photo is of dockside tavern, corner of Lipson Street and McLaren Parade).'*
- *'Alternative or additional photo suggested for Historic signage including brackets and fixings, as well as remnant painted signs on page 21.'*

How We Responded

An image has been inserted on page 15 to aid explanation.

The graphic design process has helped achieve consistency in the design and lay out of the Heritage Standard, resolving the identified formatting errors.

An alternative photo has been provided on page 18.

The Heritage Standard now includes support for balconies over footpaths.

3. Heritage Standards for Development

Section 3.1 – Purpose of Heritage Standards for Development

What We Heard

- *'It is suggested that the header at the top of Section 3 (pages 22 to 38) should read: 'Heritage Standards – Heritage Standard for Development in lieu of 'Heritage Standards – for Development.'*
- *'It is recommended that the word typically be removed from the following sentence on page 22: The Relevant Authority decides if a referral is required. The State Heritage Area Overlay 'Procedural Matters (PM) Referrals' identifies the types of development in a State Heritage Area that typically require referral. This would make it consistent with the same sentence appearing on page 4, section 1.2.'*

How We Responded

The Heritage Standard has been revised in response to these comments.

Section 3.2 – Land use

No comments provided.

Section 3.3 – New buildings

What We Heard

- *'Staff suggest changing sentence under 3.3 New Buildings (page 25) from refer: State Heritage Area Overlay – Built Form PO1.1 to PO 1.5 – note this section does not refer to Ancillary / Out Buildings to Refer: State Heritage Area Overlay – Built Form PO 1,1 to PO 1.5 – note: this section does not refer to Ancillary Development - including outbuildings, carport and garages) to maintain consistency with language used in the Planning & Design Code / State Heritage Area Overlay.'*

How We Responded

DEW appreciate the suggestions made but note that the wording of the Heritage Standard reflects the category of ancillary development. No changes have been made.

Section 3.4 – Alterations and additions

What We Heard

- *'At 3.4.1, 3.4.1(a), 3.4.1(b), 3.4.1 (d), staff suggested adding "State Heritage Area" after "Port Adelaide" to differentiate from other parts of Port Adelaide.'*
- *'Suggest adding murals, advertisements and the like to the 'not supported' column of 3.4.3(b) and 3.4.3 (d)'*

Sub-section (e) – Verandahs

- *'Regarding 3.4.3 - Verandahs, is there any restriction/comment around post size? Modern standard posts are 89mm whereas traditional posts were 102mm and even larger for commercial verandahs, this comes in a bit with builders wanting to make things easier or haven't allowed machining of posts.'*

How We Responded

The Heritage Standard has been revised in response to these comments.

Section 3.5 – Ancillary development

What We Heard

- *'At 3.5.1 staff suggested adding "State Heritage Area" after "Port Adelaide" to differentiate from other parts of Port Adelaide.'*
- *'What are the parameters around vinyl stickers to windows. Are they permitted and if so, to what extent?'*
- *'Under Businesses: two signs only, as follows: it is stated; signage materials, finish and colour to be compatible to the building. Corporate colour schemes are not supported, where visually distracting.'*
- *'How is visually distracting defined or assessed? Council forms the opinion that this requirement will be heavily contested by some business owners in the State Heritage Area and may even result in appeals against planning decisions.'*

How We Responded

DEW notes the formatting suggestions and has changed the Heritage standard to reflect this.

In response to the comment on signage, the Heritage Standard has been changed to, *'signage materials, finish and colour to be compatible with the building. Colour schemes including corporate colours are not supported, where they will dominate or distract from the heritage character of the building or streetscape.'*

DEW acknowledge the comment concerning the definition of visually distracting and it is DEW's view that the Heritage Standard already seeks to encompass various forms of visual distraction that may conflict with the heritage values of the SHA. As a result, the Heritage Standard has not been altered.

Section 3.6 – Land division

No comments provided

Section 3.7 – Landscape context and streetscape amenity

What We Heard

- *'Regarding 3.7.1, the PDI Regulations exempt the following works undertaken by a Council from the definition of 'development'; The repair or maintenance by the council of an item of street furniture (including directional signs, seating or rubbish bins), other than lighting infrastructure or a weather shelter. (emphasis added). The above exemption in the Regulations only appears to exempt works classified as 'repair or maintenance' and excludes lighting infrastructure and weather shelters.'*

How We Responded

DEW notes the comment, and also notes that it does not conflict with what is already in the Heritage Standard. No changes have been made.

No comments have been provided for section 3.8-3.9