

HERITAGE STANDARD FOR THE MOUNT TORRENS

STATE HERITAGE AREA

YourSAy Engagement Report (May 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 Mount Torrens SHA is an outstanding example of a 19th century settlement in the Adelaide Hills. It presents a surviving example of a 19th and early 20th century township, illustrating one of the early colonial era settlements in the eastern Mount Lofty Ranges.

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 Mount Torrens SHA's Statement of Heritage Significance.

The key changes in the Mount Torrens 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 DEW's heritage architects/officers, as delegates of the Minister;
- including a detailed description of the heritage features of the Mount Torrens SHA, as a context for providing advice;
- describing the 'heritage values' of the Mount Torrens 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 Mount Torrens SHA was released for public consultation on the YourSAy website from 22 July 2024 to 30 August 2024.

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

ENGAGEMENT METHODS

Emails were sent to the Adelaide Hills Council, the South Australian Heritage Council (SAHC), key community groups and government authorities summarising proposed changes, and inviting people to comment via a YourSAy engagement survey or via written submissions directly to DEW.

The public consultation was also promoted via Adelaide Hills Council, PlanSA and DEW websites, newsletters and social media.

To support property owners, residents and the general public in understanding the draft Mount Torrens 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	6 respondents
Responses to Question 12 in the YourSAy on-line survey: <i>What is the most important aspect of Mount Torren's heritage for you?</i>	6 responses
Responses to Question 13 in the YourSAy on-line survey: <i>Do you have any other comments on the Heritage Standard for the Mount Torrens State Heritage Area?</i>	6 responses
Emailed submissions (sent directly to DEW, DEW)	3 submissions, including from the following organisations: Adelaide Hills Council
Face-to-face sessions	1 face-to-face session, attended by 7 people.

WHAT WE HEARD AND HOW WE RESPONDED

GENERAL COMMENTS

Respondents made several general comments not directly related to the Heritage Standard, but rather addressing the Mount Torrens SHA more broadly. These general comments have been summarised by theme and are presented below.

What We Heard

Conservation

- Mount Torrens community members sought clarity on suitable materials and products for conservation works in the Mount Torrens SHA.
- Respondents commented on a variety of minor conservation works projects in the Mount Torrens SHA, including fencing, gardens and carports.

Local Council

- Some respondents commented on the role of local council in relation to the Heritage Standard.
- Others expressed a desire for more detailed and expanded Heritage Standards to support consistent decision making.

Consultation Feedback

- Respondents provided feedback on the length of the consultation and the need for broader community notification.
- Suggestions included direct mail-outs and placing flyers in local gathering points.

Support

- General support was shown for the Heritage Standard's recognition of Mount Torrens' unique character.
- The inclusion of a 'date range' to assess heritage significance was welcomed.

Other Feedback

- Suggestions included incorporating elements from previous conservation plans and providing clearer development guidelines (e.g. more information on acceptable paint colours and appropriate setbacks).
- Feedback also highlighted the importance of informing buyers about SHA status and promoting sympathetic new development.
- There were some queries about what heritage grants are available to Mount Torrens SHA residents.

How We Responded

Conservation

- DEW heritage advisors visit property owners within the Mount Torrens SHA when requested to provide tailored advice on appropriate conservation methods.

Local Council

- DEW consulted with the Adelaide Hills Council on the Heritage Standard due to their involvement in planning matters.
- DEW sent a letter to the Chief Executive Officer of the Adelaide Hills Council to inform them of the draft Heritage Standard.

Consultation Feedback

- Community consultation was open for a six-week period. All identified key stakeholders (including community groups) were notified as soon as consultation commenced.
- Flyers were delivered to the General Store Manager for public display, as Mount Torrens residents did not have letterboxes.

Other Feedback

- The relevant authority must first determine that works in a SHA are development, and then if referral is required. DEW only views development applications that have been referred by the relevant authority. The relevant authority is the Adelaide Hills Council. The Heritage Standard will help guide the Adelaide Hills Council.
- Respondents were provided with details of heritage grants and were also advised that 'in kind' support could also be provided by the DEW Heritage Grants team.
- More information can be found here: [Department for Environment and Water - Heritage Grants](#).

YOURSAY QUESTION 12: *What is the most important aspect of Mount Torrens' heritage for you?*

What We Heard

Comments in response to this question included:

- Respondents valued the preservation of historic buildings and the streetscape and supported undergrounding powerlines to protect the town's unique character.
- Some respondents believed that restoring or maintaining heritage properties required financial support through government grants to remain viable and attractive.
- Participants supported new development that respected the heritage setting, emphasising the importance of visual distinction and appropriate setbacks to avoid dominating older, heritage buildings.

How We Responded

The management of power lines falls under the Office of the Technical Regulator and is not a planning matter. However, the Heritage Standard includes policies addressing public realm matters to help guide preservation of the heritage values of Mount Torrens SHA.

The Heritage Conservation Grants program provides grants to owners of State Heritage Places. More information can be found here: [Department for Environment and Water - Heritage Grants](#).

Design guidance has been incorporated into the Heritage Standard that supports compatible new development through a 'building envelope' approach. The Heritage Standard addresses scale, roof pitch, façade types and setbacks to ensure streetscape cohesion while allowing differentiation between new and historic buildings.

YOURSAY QUESTION 13: *Do you have any other comments on the Heritage Standard for the Mount Torrens State Heritage Area?*

What We Heard

Comments in response to this question included:

- Clarification on the role of local council in relation to the Heritage Standard.
- Some respondents felt the consultation process lacked clarity and sufficient engagement.
- Some respondents requested clearer definitions on what constitutes development in the Heritage Standard, stronger and more enforceable guidelines (e.g., public realm standards with more information on acceptable streetscape materials and preferred paint colours), and the possibility of a technical manual to support compliance with the Heritage Standard.

How We Responded

The *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016* (PDI Act) defines 'development' and assigns the Adelaide Hills Council as the relevant authority responsible for advising on what constitutes development within the Mount Torrens SHA. Early engagement with the Adelaide Hills Council is recommended when considering any development.

The Heritage Standard may assist local council staff in interpreting heritage values and supporting assessment processes where relevant.

The consultation was promoted via the YourSAy platform, Adelaide Hills Council and DEW websites, social media, posters within Mount Torrens and a bookable one-on-one information session. Key stakeholders were notified directly.

External painting of pre-painted surfaces is not considered development and therefore is not subject to prescriptive guidance in the Heritage Standard. Language in the Heritage Standard was updated to improve clarity and remove ambiguity regarding external painting of pre-painted surfaces.

The Heritage Standard includes policy for management of public realm matters – including footpaths, roads and furniture such as bollards. As DEW's assessment tool, the Heritage Standard is intended to guide preservation of the heritage values of Mount Torrens. DEW is planning to develop technical guidelines for State Heritage Areas after 2025.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS:

The following comments are specific and technical in nature:

1. Background

No specific comments were made on the Background section of the Heritage Standard.

2. Heritage Value

Section 2.1 –Statement of Significance (Mount Torrens State Heritage Area)

What We Heard

- *'These features are listed for the built form but there is no similar reference to specific streetscape elements and landscape character that is of heritage value. Suggestion: addition of further headings and content related to streetscape elements and landscape character.'*

How We Responded

The Statement of Significance for Mount Torrens was developed and endorsed by the SAHC under the provisions of the *Heritage Places Act 1993* – DEW is unable to add to this without SAHC support. Instead, a description of the streetscape elements/ landscape character has been added as a 'feature of heritage value' within the Heritage Standard, expanding on the significance statement.

Section 2.2 - What is of Heritage Significance?

No comments made.

3. Heritage Standards for Development

No comments made on sections 3.1 – 3.3.

Section 3.4 – Alterations and additions

What We Heard

Sub-section (a): Street and side boundary setbacks

- *'Additions are to have a setback of a minimum of 1.5 metres to a side boundary. But the later setback reference to attached outbuildings in section 3.4.3 seek a setback of 1 metre to a side boundary. Suggestion: ensure the side setbacks for additions to existing buildings are consistent or provide further clarification on ancillary development.'*
- *'Diagrammatic Figure – left and centre diagrams seem to reflect additions to outbuildings rather than the principal dwelling. Suggestion: Amend diagrams to reference additions to dwellings.'*

How We Responded

The Heritage Standard has been updated so the side setbacks for additions and outbuildings are the same – 1.5m.
The diagrams have been updated.

Principle 3.4.2 – Design of additions

What We Heard

Sub-section (a) – Scale

- *'Reference to two storey additions being acceptable on steeply sloping sites where they complement the streetscape. Review this point as there is little steeply sloping land in Mount Torrens SHA. Suggestion: review the appropriateness of this point.'*
- *'Non-residential development – there is no floor area provided as a guide to the scale of non-residential buildings. Suggestion: include a range of the size of non-residential development.'*

How We Responded

The dot point referenced has been removed.

Scale is more 'height' related in this instance. The 'dwellings' and 'non-residential development' has been combined into one, to simplify.

Principle 3.4.3 – Materials, finishes and colours

What We Heard

- *'Headings are not carried over to the following pages.'*

Sub-section(d) – Exterior painting

- *'External painting – the note relating to painting of unpainted surfaces should be included in the right-handed column – not supported.'*
- *'Suggestions: add the note relating to painting of unpainted surfaces in the right-hand column – supported.'*

How We Responded

- The Heritage Standard has been updated to reflect these comments

Sub-section (e) – Verandah posts

- *'Verandahs – elsewhere enclosure of verandahs is discouraged, and this might be more appropriate section to include the comment.'*

How We Responded

- Noted. However, this section of the Heritage Standard addresses materials used, not design outcomes.

Section 3.5 – Ancillary development

Principle 3.5.1 – Outbuildings including carports, garages sheds, storage containers studios offices ...

What We Heard

- *'Dependent accommodation is now referred to as ancillary accommodation.'*
- *'The column format of acceptable and not supported would be useful in this section.'*
- *'There is no reference to the appropriateness of panel lift doors on garages and carports.'*
- *'As mentioned in Section 3.4.1 Site and location of additions – setback of attached outbuildings to side boundaries is 1m but these are effectively additions to dwellings and the setback is 1.5m for additions.'*
- *'Suggestion: Ensure the side setbacks for additions to existing buildings are consistent or provide further clarification on ancillary development.'*

How We Responded

The Heritage Standard has been updated to refer to ancillary accommodation.

The format changes have been considered, however, as the other published Heritage Standards are written this way, and consistency is preferred it has not been changed in this instance.

Panel lift doors have been added.

The setbacks section has been updated to include this suggestion.

Principle 3.5.2 – Fences and gates

What We Heard

- *'The columns format of acceptable and not supported would be useful in this section.'*
- *'There is no reference to external lighting for signage.'*

How We Responded

The column format changes have been considered, however as all published Heritage Standards follow this format, and consistency is preferred, the suggested change has not been implemented in this instance.

Signage lighting – LED signage is not supported within the State Heritage Area. No changes required.

Principle 3.5.5 – Solar panels

What We Heard

- *'There is no mention of the appropriateness of freestanding panels. Please consider the appropriateness of freestanding panel arrays.'*

How We Responded

This has been added to the Heritage Standard, especially given that there is more allotment space in the Mount Torrens SHA than what is typical to other SHAs.

Principle 3.5.7 – Plant and ancillary equipment

What We Heard

- *'There is no discussion on this section on tree planting or bollard use. Additionally, it would be helpful to also have guidelines in relation to streetscape to understand whether works are likely to materially affect the heritage value of the SHA. Suggestion: consider a review of what is acceptable and not supported in the same column format used in section 3.4.3.'*

How We Responded

DEW proposes to develop specific, detailed streetscape guidelines for SHAs as separate, detailed technical guides after 2025. This will better suit the matters covered by the *Planning and Design Code*.

Section 3.6 – Land division

Principle 3.6.1 - Land division characteristics

What We Heard

- *'Paragraph 2 refers to amalgamation which is not development. Should this be referring to boundary alignment?'*

How We Responded

The text has been reviewed and revised.

Section 3.7 – Landscape context and streetscape amenity

Principle 3.7.1 – Landscape character

What We Heard

- *'Proposal to amend the description of landscape character to include a detailed description of the Mount Torrens streetscape and what it should and should not include.'*
- *'Proposal to include more detail on the actions that impact the heritage values of the area and are not exempt from the definition of development.'*
- *'Proposal to include the statement that statutory documentation such as Conservation Management Plans and Concept Plans may provide guidance as part of DEW advice.'*
- *'Request to include specific information on what is acceptable for footpaths, driveways, kerbing, street planting and verges and street furniture.'*

- *'The colour chart from the Maldon Streetscape Guidelines, Victoria was provided for an example of giving a choice of colours but all within the right colourway.'*

How We Responded

The Statement of Significance for Mount Torrens was developed and endorsed by the SAHC—a description of the landscape character of Mount Torrens is not able to be added to the Statement of Significance without SAHC support. A description of the streetscape elements / landscape character has been added to the Heritage Standard as a 'feature of heritage value' instead, expanding on the significance statement. DEW instead proposed to develop specific streetscape guidelines for SHAs as separate, detailed technical guides in 2025-2026. This will better suit the structure and policy intent of the Planning and Design Code.

Definition of development in relation to a State Heritage Place/ State Heritage Area is provided in the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016*. The Relevant Authority advises if 'actions' are development or not based on the provisions of the PDI Act. This is not a matter for the DEW document.

Conservation Management Plans and Concept Plans – do form a part of our advice and are considered 'other documents' in the SHA Overlay. A Conservation Management Plan is not a statutory document. This is why it is not directly referenced in the Planning and Design Code and the Heritage Standard.

A detailed list of existing heritage streetscape features, such as paths, posts and trees, has been added to the principles outlining management of Landscape Character – 3.7.1. New streetscape works are to be compatible in design with these heritage features.

Colour charts – colour selection is not a statutory matter, so not suitable in a Heritage Standard. DEW aims to create a 'technical guideline' instead into the future, which will discuss colours per SHA.

Section 3.8 - Demolition

No specific comments made.

Section 3.9 - Conservation Works

Principle 3.9.1 – Conservation approach

What We Heard

- *'There is no guidance provided on what is acceptable and not supported to help guide planners as to whether works are likely to materially affect the heritage value of the SHA.'*
- *'Consider a review of what is acceptable and not supported in the same column.'*

How We Responded

This topic is very broad hence why there is limited discussion in the Heritage Standard. DEW propose to develop a guide note on the application of the phrase 'materially affect the context'. DEW defines 'minor in nature' and 'maintenance' in the same manner.