



Façade of Adelaide's former Fruit and Produce Exchange, which is a State Heritage Place.

A NEW FRAMEWORK FOR PRESERVING OUR HISTORIC LEGACY AND VALUED CHARACTER

My interest in heritage and character matters is personal and long-standing. In fact I have spent much of my life involved in the heritage movement including two stints as Chair of the Civic Trust and as a current trustee for South Australia's History Trust.

— BY MICHAEL LENNON

As a young person I was involved in the survey and listing of Mintaro as a State Heritage Area through to overseeing the redevelopment of Adelaide's East End and preservation of its famous Fruit and Produce Exchange facade. Through Housing Choices Australia I'm currently responsible for the adaptive reuse of Light Square's Former City Mission Hall built in 1877, which has stood empty for the past 15 years and includes preservation of its state-heritage listed frontage.

With this background as Chair of the State Planning Commission we recently released a new heritage and character framework for the Planning and Design (the Code), which will come into effect in Adelaide in just over 12 months.

This framework proposes the introduction of four new heritage overlays and one character overlay. In the new Code, which is currently under development, 'overlays' will trump - for want of a better word - zones and zone policy in the new system. Overlays therefore have the advantage of being able to apply to all or part of any zone and across many different zones across the state.

The easiest way to think about this is that the four heritage overlays will provide a continuum of protections for the different types of heritage they will cover. All the heritage overlays will have demolition controls.

The first two overlays are for State Heritage Areas - of which there are 17 across the state, including areas such as Colonel Light Gardens and Hahndorf - and State Heritage Places - of which there are 2,296 across the state, like the Old Gum Tree at Glenelg or the Port Pirie Railway Museum. As you would expect these will have the highest level of protection.

Local Heritage Places - of which there are 7,250 across 39 councils - will have the next level of protection. Examples of these include the Elder Smith Wool Store in Port Adelaide, the Angaston District Cemetery in the Barossa and the Post Office in Dry Creek.

State Heritage Areas and Places and Local Heritage Places all need to meet specific legislative criteria.

The fourth heritage overlay - to be called a 'Local Heritage Area' overlay - will cover all areas now described as Historic Conservation Zones or Areas. This is the overlay into which all but about 100 of the 11,922 existing 'Contributory Items' will automatically transfer and be protected via demolition control in the new planning system.

The protections for these items currently comes from their location in the Historic Conservation Zones or Areas, and not from their identification as a 'Contributory Item', hence why the Commission is proposing the removal of this label in the new planning system.

It is also important to understand that in the current system these items have no legislative criteria to define them and that demolition of Contributory Items, contrary to popular belief, is allowed 'on merit' (with the exception of one part of Gawler).

Furthermore, the Commission is offering councils the opportunity to assess their Contributory Items against Local Heritage Place criteria should they wish to do so and submit a heritage Development Plan Amendment over the next 18 months. This will enable Contributory Items that meet the required criteria to be afforded even greater heritage protection.

In addition to the four heritage overlays, the Commission is also proposing an overlay for 'Character Areas'. These are primarily residential streetscapes in local suburbs that give a community its identity or a specific 'look and feel'. An example of this is Ballara Street in Mile End.

These new overlays will bring consistency, transparency and fairness to the treatment of heritage and character across the whole state. The protections afforded - including demolition controls - will come from the policy in the overlay and will be consistent across council boundaries. This will ensure the rules relating to heritage are clear and predictable for all South Australian homeowners, neighbours and the community.

The Commission is now working with local councils to determine the policy detail of each of these overlays. All South Australians will be able to have their say on the proposed heritage and character framework when Phase Two of the Code for regional council areas is released on consultation in mid-2019 and again when Phase Three of the Code covering metropolitan council areas is released on consultation in late 2019/early 2020.

Let me reassure you that there is no truth to claims that all Contributory Items will lose their protection under the new planning system, paving the way for wholesale demolition across our suburbs.

This misinformation is clouding the community debate and creating unnecessary angst.

In summary, the Commission's proposed heritage framework will:

- consist of four heritage overlays and a character area overlay
- unquestionably preserve all 2,300 state heritage and 7,250 local heritage items under 'State Heritage Areas', 'State Heritage Places' and 'Local Heritage Places' overlays
- automatically transfer 11,810 Contributory Items within Historic Conservation Zones or Areas to a new 'Local Heritage Area' overlay with demolition control
- provide councils with an opportunity to elevate Contributory Items from a Local Heritage Area to a Local Heritage Place via a heritage Development Plan Amendment should they wish to over the next 18 months
- work with councils on the 112 Contributory Items that currently sit outside Historic Conservation Zones to determine how best to transition them into the new planning system
- retain and protect suburban streetscapes and character through a new 'Character Areas' overlay

The Commission is advocating for higher and consistent standards of heritage assessment and retention across the state, with the aim of creating a balanced and reasonable planning system that looks to the future needs of the state, as well as defending its past.

Michael Lennon, Chair State Planning Commission

For more information visit the SA Planning Portal or follow the State Planning Commission on LinkedIn.

A GUIDE TO DEMOLITION CONTROL FOR HERITAGE IN THE NEW PLANNING SYSTEM

