



**Australian
Institute of
Architects**

SA

Response to Removal of Interim State Heritage Listing for Shed 26

The recent decision by the Environment Minister to remove the interim State Heritage listing of Shed 26 at Port Adelaide is of concern to the SA Chapter of the Australian Institute of Architects. It raises questions in relation to heritage listing process and the broader context of how major developments, are delivered in South Australia.

Heritage Concerns

The Institute is committed to a best practice heritage listing process in accordance with the Burra Charter and UNESCO protocols. Preservation of heritage places is important in recognising our culture and history and in the creation of engaging environments for current and future generations

- Heritage value is not dependent on economic considerations. The criteria for listing a place are clearly defined in the Act and should not be overridden by financial considerations.
- The Institute understands that the Environment Minister acted within the terms of the SA Heritage Places Act 1993 in not accepting the Heritage Council recommendation to list Shed 26. However, making this decision on primarily economic grounds intrinsically devalues the listing process and does not reflect recognised international best practice.

Concerns regarding Development Processes in South Australia

The Institute believes that it is the responsibility of government to manage critical tasks such as master planning of significant precincts and that good design principles and community expectations need to be prioritised over private development objectives. A proactive approach by government in relation to these issues would deliver greater benefit to the community, act as a model for future development in South Australia and better demonstrate the intent of the government's urban design policies.

- Community consultation needs to be transparent and reflected in policy governing future development. Consultation processes are devalued when outcomes are not translated into clear and defensible directives for future development.
- Government has a responsibility to facilitate the creation of excellent urban environments through legislation and policy. The ODASA Principles for Good Design and The State Planning Policies are two examples of government's articulation of strategies for achieving quality urban development. However, when these policies remain as guidelines only for future development, as opposed to mandated requirements, they do not provide effective safeguards for the creation of high-quality urban environments.

- Development of significant land holdings should be undertaken in accordance with best practice. This should include a comprehensive site analysis, genuine community consultation and a detailed masterplan for the site. Government, as a significant land holder, should demonstrate leadership in this.
- Public confidence in development decision making processes are eroded when communication at the inception of a project is not realised in the constructed outcome. The community has a right to expect that proposals made at the early stages of a project should provide an accurate indication of the final development outcome.
- Economic factors are frequently cited by government as reasons for making development related decisions. While construction activity is important to the State's economy, this benefit is delivered over a relatively short period of time compared to the life of the development. The economic impact of poor design lasts for decades and has significant negative impact at a social, environmental and cultural level.
- Demolition of existing structures frequently occurs well in advance of development of the site. The outcome is a vacant site over an extended period, which is unsightly and impacts on property values in the vicinity. Pre-emptive demolition provides no opportunity to re-evaluate the merit of the building in the future and should not be permitted where a viable development proposal for a site has not been approved.

Conclusion

The Institute strongly supports processes that result in development of diverse built environments that celebrate our past, create a distinct sense of place and foster vibrant communities. These processes can only be realistically delivered through the actions of responsible and forward-thinking government. This is evident in well managed government led urban regeneration projects around the world.

There are also significant precedents that demonstrate the adaptability of large industrial buildings. Retention of these structures presents a valuable opportunity for creating quality places that are based on narrative, imagination, and authenticity. Shed 26 is a significant Port Adelaide landmark and would provide a unique sense of place in the new development that will be lost through demolition.