

HERITAGE IMPACTS ASSESSMENT

**Proposed Multistorey Residential Dwelling
25 South Esplanade , Glenelg**

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The subject property is located at the corner of South Esplanade and Pier Street , Glenelg, with a Local Heritage Place adjacent the site on the northern side at 22 – 23 South Esplanade . The site formerly contained a two storey holiday flats building but is now vacant .

The adjacent Local Heritage place was constructed in 1882 as a pair of adjoining dwellings and in the 144 years since , has been adapted to multiple , varied uses and undergone many alterations and additions which have significantly lowered its historical integrity .

I have been asked by the proponents to review the impacts if any of the proposed development on the heritage values of the adjacent Local Heritage Place and my assessment follows herein.

The proposed Development

It is proposed to construct a contemporary five storey residential building immediately south of the Local Heritage Place at the Pier Street corner , with primary facades to South Esplanade and Pier Street . The main entrance to the building will be at natural ground level from Pier Street , from where ramped vehicle access to three basement car parking levels will also be effected . Unlike its heritage listed neighbour it will be sited orthogonally to South Esplanade which has a variety of building alignments between Moseley Square and Pier Street.

The western façade of the proposed building will be set back 2.4 metres from the South Esplanade boundary with deeply recessed balconies and a stylised podium element of similar height to the front façade of the adjacent historic building . It will incorporate raised planter beds across the front with a rounded , more deeply indented corner to physically and visually emphasise their separate built forms .

The architectural detailing of the western front façade of the proposed building has been designed with strongly modulated balconies to present a less monolithic built form appearance and a simplified , streamlined architectural style to contrast with the more robust architecture of the Local Heritage Place . All facades of the proposed building will have a light colour palette to further reduce its visual presence in the local townscape .

The proposed development is illustrated in the below 3D image and in more detail in Chasecrowns Drawings Package 24ESP Version dated 14/05/2026 .



Photograph 1 : 3D image of the proposed development at 25 South Esplanade with the Local Heritage Place partly visible at left .

Heritage Values of the Local Heritage Place

The 1997 Glenelg Heritage Policies Review by McDougall & Vines identified a number of key themes of relevance to the historical development of Glenelg and recommended the establishment of five Historic Conservation Zones and a Schedule of Local Heritage Places in the Holdfast Bay Council Area .

Seafront residential development was noted within the themes identified as an important element in the historical development of Glenelg ,viz..... *“An important housing type in Glenelg was the seaside mansion , emphasising the use of Glenelg as a recreational area and retreat for wealthy citizens during summer months “.....”Houses from this period between 1870 and 1890 form a large part of the built fabric of the suburb”*

In regard to South Esplanade , the McDougall & Vines report recognised the existing State Heritage Places at Nos 6-7, 14, 16 and 32 South Esplanade , and recommended the additional listing of Nos 3-4, 10-11, and 21-25 South Esplanade as Local Heritage Places . But given the diversified nature of the existing seafront townscape , the 1997 Review did not include the South Esplanade within any of the five Historic Conservation Zones proposed , and in the event , only 22-23 South Esplanade was included in the subsequently established Schedule of Local Heritage Places .

In 2001 , 22-23 South Esplanade was listed by the City of Holdfast Bay as a Local Heritage Place under Criteria (a) and (d) of the SA Development Act 1993 . The listing was described in the Development Plan as *“Seawall Apartments; original external form and detailing of the dwellings”*. It has since been carried forward as a Local Heritage Place into Part 11 of the Planning & Design Code . The relevant criteria are as follows :

(a) it displays historical, economic or social themes that are of importance to the local area ;

(d) it displays aesthetic merit , design characteristics or construction techniques of significance to the local area ;

The heritage assessment of 22-23 South Esplanade undertaken by McDougall and Vines which underpinned its Local Heritage listing did not provide a Statement of Heritage Significance to clarify the place’s key heritage values , or elaborate on how the historic building was seen to meet the individual statutory criteria cited . In the context of Criterion (a) it was claimed *“This building is representative of the residential development along this stretch of Glenelg’s foreshore when Glenelg was being developed as a seaside resort and marine retreat for gentlemen of means”* but there was no elaboration of its representative value beyond its existence . Nor did the heritage assessment ascribe any specific aesthetic , design or construction heritage values to the property in regard to Criterion (d) .

The recommended extent of listing in the report was : *“The original external form and detailing of the dwellings where this remains”* , with the degree of change that had occurred to the building(s) recognised by the added comment that *“Later alterations and additions are not included”*. The building interior is also excluded from the listing . **No specific importance was attributed to the place’s setting in the assessment of its heritage values.**

With its long history of varied uses as attached dwellings, preparatory school , rental apartments , a refuge for unmarried mothers , a private hotel , and holiday flats , building modifications undertaken with each change of use have removed much original fabric and severely degraded the historical integrity of the property . With original aesthetic features such as the ornate, iron laced verandah/balconies , parapet and pediment adornments , most original chimneys , and broomstick front fences all having been removed, the external form and detailing of the original paired residences is now only discernible from close inspection and analysis . Indeed the claim made in the 1997 Heritage Assessment that *“the original detailing of the early dwellings can be seen in number 22 where much of the form and architectural elements remain”* is incorrect , with none of the original verandah/balconies or front fences having survived , and the few remnant elements of ornament such as eaves brackets, rendered quoins and surrounds of no inherent heritage value , being typical of the period and without any identifiable merit that would raise their aesthetic significance .

The photographs below show the Local Heritage Place as it was originally constructed and its now much altered state today .



Photograph 2 : Photograph of 22-23 South Esplanade c 1909. at right of picture , the last building between Moseley Square and Pier Street at that time(PH-GL-0099).



Photograph 3 : Similar view of 22-23 South Esplanade today showing later additions to frontage and non-historic verandah balconies at front and on south side .



Photograph 4 : View of the much altered Local Heritage Place looking South-East

Heritage Impacts of the Proposed Development

The Heritage Adjacency Overlay in the Planning & Design Code contains few policies to influence the design of development adjacent to State and Local Heritage Places beyond the desired outcome of maintaining the heritage and cultural values of those Places (DO.1) , through development that does not “*dominate , encroach on or unduly impact **the setting of the place***” (PO 1.1). **There is no stated requirement for the design , detailing , materials palette or built form appearance of adjacent development to complement or be compatible with** the built form appearance of an adjacent heritage place . As the site of the proposed development is not a new land division , PO 2.1 is not relevant .

In my long experience as a Heritage Architect involved in the development and application of heritage conservation policy , it is my understanding that the idea that development adjacent a historic building should not dominate it is intended to be a qualitative rather than a quantitative assessment , with the primary intention that adjacent development should not diminish the physical presence of a heritage place in its contextual setting .

Since the evolution of “skyscrapers” over a hundred years ago, there have been increasingly large scale disparities present in our cities , with numerous examples of tall buildings erected beside smaller historic buildings, both listed and unlisted . In this context , a scale disparity between an adjacent development and a Heritage Place need be of little concern , provided there is sufficient separation to allow the Heritage Place to retain a visually discrete 3-dimensional built form in its contextual setting .

A relevant nearby example is the contemporary multistorey residential building at 8 South Esplanade which is sited adjacent the two-storey , State Heritage listed Seafeld Tower building at 6 -7 South Esplanade (SH ID 12029).



Photograph 5 : The State Heritage listed Seafeld Tower sitting adjacent the contemporary multistorey residential building at 8 South Esplanade

It should also be noted that corner sites in our towns and villages have traditionally been used for landmark buildings which did not emulate their neighbours, but sought to exert their own presence in the street and townscape .

The heritage values of 22 – 23 South Esplanade reside principally in its historical association with the construction of substantial seaside dwellings by well-to-do Adelaide merchants and pastoralists in the boom development period of the 1870s-80s and its example of a Victorian era duplex dwelling . However as very little of the “*original external form and detailing*” of the frontage of 22-23 South Esplanade has survived and the buildings’ much altered frontage today consists largely of non-original building fabric , I do not believe its severely degraded historic integrity warrants the design deference of adjacent development beyond consideration of its physical impact on the heritage place’s historical setting .

Accordingly I am of the opinion that the proposed five storey residential building should adopt a contemporary architectural expression that references its corner position and coastal locality in preference to making unnecessary references to the diminished built form and architecture of the adjacent heritage building , and that a contrasting design style will have no meaningful impact on the heritage values or its isolated setting in a seafront townscape with a diversity of building scales and styles.

Conclusions

The Local Heritage Place has little in common with the built form appearance of other buildings in its immediate locality and its distant siting from other historic buildings along South Esplanade means it does not have a comprehensible historic townscape context. In its isolated setting it therefore contributes no meaningful regulating lines to the local townscape . Its side and rear facades have much less architectural detailing and their current exposure does not reflect the buildings' historical setting on South Esplanade .

As there are already large variations of building scale along South Esplanade, I do not believe the scale disparity between the old and new buildings will directly impact the singular setting of the subject Local Heritage Place .

Having reviewed the historical context of the adjacent Local Heritage Place , its non-original built form and non-historical setting in the now diverse townscape of South Esplanade , I am of the view that the built form composition and design of the proposed development will fulfil the intent of the Historic Adjacency Overlay and that the scale disparity between the Local Heritage Place and the proposed new building need not be given undue importance. I also believe it is appropriate for the proposed development to adopt a contemporary architectural expression consistent with its seaside location , rather than defer to the built form and detailing of the now much diminished adjacent Local Heritage Place .

Bruce Harry FRAIA



27 May 2026

Principal Sources

SLSA Historic Photographs Collection
Holdfast Bay History Centre Historic Photographs Collection and Historic Rate Assessments
SLSA Historic Maps Collection
SAILIS Historic Lands Titles
Boothby/Sands & McDougall Directories of S.A.
NLA digitised historic newspapers (Trove)
"Historic Glenelg , Birthplace of S.A. 1855-1979", City of Glenelg, 1979
"The Development of Western Adelaide" Lester Firth & Murton 1982
Glenelg Heritage Survey , Hignett and Company , 1983
Glenelg Heritage Policies Review , Final Report , McDougall & Vines , 1997