

# Adelaide's Heritage is not as protected as you might think.

I am a young professional who has travelled extensively overseas, and been a Planner and Heritage Consultant for the Adelaide City Council. I am dismayed at what, in this day and age, is still happening to Adelaide's historic buildings.

Examples of concern include:

- How valuable assets like the Criterion Hotel, (opposite the Town Hall) and significant historic houses in North Adelaide are still being demolished.
- That the Council in the 1970s successfully staved off an application to demolish the North Adelaide Village buildings as part of a supermarket development, long before any heritage listing, this same building was substantially demolished only this year.
- That while cities like Sydney are successfully converting warehouse buildings into funky, popular warehouse apartments, we in Adelaide have witnessed the demolition of the most significant Warehouse building in Adelaide, the Repco Warehouse building in King William Street. Likewise Southcotts, in Gilles Street, and the former ANZ Office furniture warehouse in Waymouth Street are other examples of lost opportunity.
- That deliberate political decisions are made by the present Council majority to not list particular properties simply because the owner objects, irrespective of the historical merits of the property or the validity of the objection.
- While in the 1980s office boom Council successfully guided the development on the south side of Grenfell Street; retaining the original character buildings as podiums and producing a vital and interesting streetscape. (We need only look at the towers that rise behind to get a gauge of how this street might otherwise have turned out.) Yet this approach is regrettably no longer being pursued.

## The direction the city is taking

This is the unfortunate legacy of the newly elected Council of 1992. And once again in 2006 the present Council voted to not list any properties where the owner objected in North Adelaide.

*The cumulative result is that Adelaide is going backwards in so far as it is still losing the very buildings that make Adelaide a particularly attractive and charming city in which to live and work; & commercially as a significant tourist destination.*

The current majority on Council have, in my view, a skewed perception of the community's desire for heritage protection of their City, and of how far they have to go to please developers to make Adelaide a dynamic City.

It seems that most Council members fall over themselves to approve whatever is offered up; for example if a new glass box building is labelled green, then that is taken as a licence to disregard the planning rules upon which the community & other developers are entitled to rely. I believe new development should comply with the planning rules. Any variance should be the "exception to the rule" which would need to have substantial public benefit and so have merit proportionate to any trade-off with the Development Plan.

There could be good outcomes. In the 1980s office boom, the Council successfully guided the development on the south side of Grenfell Street; retaining the original character buildings as podiums and producing a vital and interesting streetscape. We need only look at the towers that rise behind to get a gauge of how this street might otherwise have turned out.

I believe strongly that Adelaide should not have a defeatist "we must take what it can get" attitude in terms of development, but rather that commercially and culturally as a community, we should take advantage of Adelaide's historic built form assets. We needn't through the proverbial "baby out with the bath water."

I work with a range of different developers and I know that what they want is certainty, not 'carte blanche' or the current, absurd situation, where some properties are heritage listed and other identical buildings are not.

*My honest belief is that, since the early 1990s, it's been open slather for any building that was not designated on any sort of heritage list and worryingly, that includes many properties that most of us would have assumed were protected.*

The current Council majority support voluntary heritage listing. Sadly, I know only too well, from my role a Planner with Council in the early 1990s, that voluntary listing is about as effective as voluntary speed limits. I believe that it protects only those buildings, which are not in danger of demolition; leaving those that most need protection, completely vulnerable.

*The community should be able to expect a reasonable, fair and equitable listing of the places, which it values.*

## Issues of importance to me

*Higher standard of city building design.*

*Increased funding assistance for Heritage property owners.*

*Retention of bluestone kerbing & planting of street trees.*

*Provision of adequate community services.*

*Increased incentive for rainwater tanks & wetlands for stormwater in SouthParklands.*

*Preservation of Col. Light's Parklands vision.*

*Responsible financial management including minimalisation of Council Rates.*

*A vibrant city, but not at the expense of its best assets.*

**If you agree with my outlook  
Please support me**

**Vote Sandy Wilkinson 1**

*If I can help you or to discuss any  
council issue contact*

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**Vote Sandy Wilkinson for council**

*Who is Sandy Wilkinson?*

I live in a Local Heritage Listed property in North Adelaide with my wife Robyn and two small children.

I am qualified in both Architecture and Town Planning, and specialise in heritage restoration, modern residential design and property development. This unusual combination gives me a broad and balanced perspective on development.

*Getting the most out of the old and the new together  
epitomises my approach to architecture and planning.*

I have a small design, planning and heritage consultancy practice, Alexander Wilkinson Design Pty Ltd., which has been located in the City's East End and employs three staff.

I have put my skills to work also on our North Adelaide family home, restoring the original house and adding a modern rear extension that complements the heritage building.