

Storms in Glenelg

This is the story of urban development on the waterfront in Glenelg with specific reference to the Holdfast Shores project. This project along with other waterfront developments, drove a wedge between councilors of the City of Holdfast Bay which in some cases developed into personal acrimony and contributed to the sitting Mayor of 25 years, to lose his seat. It was a development that started life in that of the Glenelg Council, and after its amalgamation with the City of Brighton in 1997, became the project of the City of Holdfast Bay after a joint infrastructure agreement between Council, the State Government and the Holdfast Shores Consortium in 1997.

Skipper image

Aerial photographs

The development of Glenelg's shoreline started with the temporary tent town in place when the Proclamation was read on 28 December, 1836.

Skipper image

As transport between Adelaide and Glenelg improved with the development of the first railway line in 1873, mansions such as Seafield Tower (belonging to Sir Thomas Elder and Sir Henry Ayers, now flats), Tremere, on the South East Corner of Anzac Highway (belonging to William Rounsevell, now demolished) and several others (now demolished) were erected on the sand dunes along the beach as were other mansions with large tracts of land such as the Olives (State Heritage listed) and cottages within the township itself.

Glenelg became the State's premier seaside resort with seaside recreational activities. The Jetty played a prominent part in the amusement activities of Glenelg, with fun fairs, followed by Luna Park, followed by side show alley followed by Magic Mountain, developing on the northern side of the foreshore. Colley and Wigley Reserves enabled a vista to the sea for the mansions along Colley Terrace and south of the jetty, mansions such as Seafield Tower, Stormont and Glenara were built. The mansions along Colley Terrace have been demolished, others have lost their land. Many of the smaller houses have also disappeared as a result of development over the years. Streetscapes have been ruined by unsympathetic building infill. Much of Glenelg's character has been lost.

Waterborne activities are an integral part of Glenelg's recreational activities with sailing and surfing clubs erected along its shore.

The Glenelg Sailing Club founded in 1898 as the Glenelg Dingy Club started out in a shack on the jetty, moved onto a site next to the Patawalonga in 1923 and built a substantial building there in 1962. This building was demolished to make way for the urban development of Holdfast Shores Stage 1. The Glenelg Surf Life Saving Club was rebuilt as part of Holdfast Shore Stage 2 development.

Stage 2 has only recently been completed and involved the shore line north of the Glenelg Town Hall. This development, because of the high-rise buildings erected, has meant that the buildings along Colley Terrace lost their view of the sea.

In November 1994 the Holdfast Shores Consortium, which consisted of Boulderstone Hornibrook, Kinsmen and Woodhead Firth Lee, was appointed by the State Government to prepare, at the Consortium's initiative, a master plan for the Glenelg/West beach redevelopment. The master plan was presented to the Minister for Housing and Urban Development on 13 October 1995. The area proposed for urban development took in the foreshore from Moseley Square to the mouth of the Patawalonga river.

There had apparently been resistance to developmental proposals in this area before as according to a brochure produced by Holdfast Shore Consortium 'Over time, it has been recognized that the site is not meeting the expectations of the community or fulfilling its natural role as a recreational and tourism focal point on the metropolitan coastline. Several attempts to resolve this situation have foundered because of the difficulties in delineating the issues and agreeing on the appropriate public and private sector responses.'

It became a State Government initiative to overcome the resistance, as the brochure went on to say

'To a very large extent this nexus has now been broken with the Government initiating a three part programme to

- . remedy the water management practices in the catchment area feeding the Patawalonga basin
- . rehabilitate the Patawalonga Basin to provide year round primary water contact
- . enhance the recreational and tourism amenity at Glenelg adjoining the mouth of the Patawalonga.'

The master plan produced by the Holdfast Shores Consortium and submitted to the Minister on 12 October 1995, was in response to the third element of this program. It noted that the area 'from Moseley Square to the Mouth of the Patawalonga represents an area of historical, recreational and economic significance to the South Australian community.'

The plan 'proposes that Glenelg provide a focal point and critical mass for passive, family orientated, leisure activities...great effort has been made to create a scheme which will stand the test of time, create a sense of enhancement within the community.'

Stage 1 of the redevelopment, which focused on the area around the Patawalonga and the newly created harbour marina, was approved under the development Assessment Commission (DAC) between 1997 and 1999. Stage 2A, the area now known as the Oaks Hotel was given approval in 2000. Stage 2B, the entertainment proposal of stage 2 was excluded from stage 2 Governor approval, hence Stage 2A&B. Council gave approval for crucial stages of stage 2B in 2000, 2001 and 2002.

What infact did Glenelg get?

Photo of end of Anzac Highway

A round- about at the end of Anzac Highway with a view of high rise flats instead of open space and the sea, high rise blocks of flats, cafes and a shopping precinct around a marina in the Patawalonga,

Photos up until end of rotunda

high rise flats along the foreshore with a loss of views of the beach along Colley Terrace, the removal of Magic Mountain with in its place the recreational facility named The BeacHouse and a ferris wheel on the reserve, a new Surf Life Saving Club house, loss of public open space and the Glenelg yacht club, the demolition of the old police station and Court House,

Photos of police station etc

car parks and an underground car park whose excavation caused the heritage listed Glenelg Town hall, wall to sink. The latter had the flow on affect that the City of Holdfast Bay Council could no longer meet in the Glenelg Town Hall as that half of the building was deemed unsafe, and Council offices were moved from the building for the same reason. This had a flow on affect in Brighton as it resulted in Council meetings being held in the Civic Centre, Brighton and an office housing problem at the Civic Centre and Ringwood House in Brighton. The Glenelg Town Hall has still not been fixed but the Jetty Road Main Street Board and the Bay Discovery Centre have continued to function within the building.

Why the bad feeling within Council?

The Holdfast Shores consortium worked in collaboration with the SA Urban Projects Authority and the City of Holdfast Bay. Because of the latter, many residents of Glenelg who were anti-development of the foreshore, blamed the Council for the result they did not like. However this anger was not quite fair as although Council could influence this State initiative project, there was no way they could try to halt it without incurring enormous litigation costs in a battle they would probably not win.

The City of Glenelg had amalgamated with the City of Brighton in 1997 to form the City of Holdfast Bay. Brighton and Glenelg were now part of a whole. It would be fair to say that most Brightonites viewed the development taking place in Glenelg with a fair amount of horror. As part of the 'sea-change' coastal real estate boom, other developers also became interested in the area and houses great and small, were demolished for closer urban development in both areas, especially along the foreshore. The land had become worth much more than the house that stood on it. High-rise however was prevented at the Brighton end.

The Glenelg Residents Association was vocally anti-development and targeted Councilors they thought to be pro-development and encouraged candidates to stand against them in the forthcoming elections. Brian Nadilo, long-standing Mayor of Glenelg and subsequently of Holdfast Bay, lost his seat in the Council elections of May 2003 to new Councilor Dr Ken Rollond who campaigned on an anti-development platform for the Mayoral position.

Council itself ran an anti development campaign 'Enough is Enough' with all Councilors participating, but this did not prevent councilors who were still perceived as having been pro development, to loose their seats at the Council elections of November 2006

Anecdotal is that some of the residents and at least one Councilor who were very anti-development, were in fact living in the flats of the Holdfast Shores development project.

Mayor Ken Rollond came under censure, as an old mansion along Colley Terrace that had belonged to his wife's family was sold to developers who subsequently demolished it. Once a building was sold, the seller no longer had control over what happened to it whether they were anti-development or not.

Photos of Seafield Tower etc

The demise of Magic Mountain (erected in 1982) as part of Holdfast Shores stage 2B project, was not without controversy and one of the concerns expressed was what would happen to the old historic merry-go-round? However the recreational replacement to Magic Mountain, The BeachHouse is to my mind less of an eyesore than Magic Mountain and the ferris wheel on Colley Reserve, will come into action by the end of 2008. The merry-go-round was restored and incorporated within the BeachHouse. Council bought some of the entertainment machines from Magic Mountain as part of its historic collection held by the Holdfast Bay History Centre, for future display in the Bay Discovery Centre.

Increased urban density on Glenelg's foreshore has led to the perception that Glenelg has major parking problems, especially around the shopping precinct of Jetty Road and the areas along the foreshore. Although parking facilities were created in conjunction with Holdfast Shores project stages 1 and 2, the parking provided is paid parking, something that residents of the city do not want to use. They want to be able to park in front of the shop they wish to patronize.

The development has changed the demographics of the area. There is now a high-rise densely populated area where there was once mainly open space and a carpark. Some of the flats are serviced apartments and there is also another hotel. Many of the people that bought flats to live in for themselves are older 'sea-change' people, and many would regard the influx of youth to the area wanting a good time, with suspicion. There is a perception that the influx of seaside resort people, who haunt the cafes and pubs that have increased in the area, provide a sometimes rowdy night-life and that the area has become unsafe. Binge drinking is a Council focus at the moment as is the perceived crime level in the foreshore and related areas. In fact another of the reasons given for moving Council meetings to Brighton was that some Councilors did not feel safe walking to their cars at night after a Council meeting in the Glenelg Town Hall.

There is still a perception amongst many residents and some of the present councilors for that matter, that all the perceived evils of development were the fault of the previous Council and its councilors. This brings with it the perception by some Councilors that many of the decisions made by the previous Council, even though not development related, were wrong. The fact that Holdfast Shores was a State Government initiated project which Council could not have stopped, is overlooked.