

Provoking Consciousness

Towards a Bioregional Understanding of Local Character: Urbanisation of the Fringe at Willunga Basin, South Australia



Pragathi

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Declaration

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Pragathi (Candidate)

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Abstract

In 2010, a team of local government stakeholders set out to prepare a bid for United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) World Heritage Site recognition and conservation of the distinctive settler-colonial agrarian landscape of the Mount Lofty Ranges, which bound the urban hinterland of Adelaide, South Australia. In the context of that ongoing bid process and global concern over loss of precious food-growing regions to urban development, this thesis focuses on the rural–urban development contest in the Willunga Basin, a key subregion of the proposed World Heritage Site. With particular reference to the question of ‘local character’ at the urban fringe, the study investigates the mechanisms at play in the Basin in maintaining a resilient dialogue between urban and rural development priorities.

Exploring the proposition that distinctive cultural landscapes such as the Willunga Basin could be described, alternatively, as exemplary ‘bioregions’, the study applies crucial principles of bioregional planning as a theoretical framework through which local knowledge of the land together with the intangible goals of ‘living-in-place’, ‘land ethics’ and ‘place attachment’ may be engaged as analytical approaches to understand the nature and significance of ‘local character’ in the built environment. The Willunga Basin community is eager to protect and enhance this putative ‘bioregion’ and to protect the qualities that are central to the UNESCO bid—a working agrarian landscape, a distinctive cultural landscape, and a site of natural beauty with high value placed on local character and compatible urban development and architectural projects. However, this has not been an easy process.

Development policies established in the 1960s highlighted the ‘local character’ of the region while seeking to protect townships within the Willunga Basin from urban sprawl. However, these policies also precipitated the urban expansion of the coastal township of nearby Aldinga, dividing the Basin into two regions and ultimately bringing the rural–urban conflict to a head at the boundaries of that division. By closely studying the elements of this conflict, this research identifies a gap between the aims and principles of such planning policies and development approval processes in practice. Taking a multidisciplinary approach—grounded in architectural and urban planning research, but drawing on the tools of ethnological and social inquiry, as well as historical and

correlational research—the primary research consists of in-depth case studies of recent development proposals and the controversies raised. The six cases examined encompass a range of different development situations, types and outcomes—from housing layouts and streetscapes to retail outlets and a multi-storeyed building proposal—to explore the various policy issues and community voices raised in the public consultation process.

The findings reveal multiple points of failure in practice, including lack of effective reference points of what contributes to local character; the production of sub-standard everyday architecture, resulting from a mismatch between development policy and the practice of development approvals; ineffectual and often tokenistic community consultation; and poor engagement between the local community and mostly passive developers with little contextual knowledge.

The study indicates how a bioregional understanding of a cultural landscape, and the potential for sustainable development within it, underscores the particular significance of ‘local character’ in such contexts, and of a ‘conscious community’ prepared to engage in the challenge of interpreting it. By improving the process of identifying and retaining local character through meaningful dialogues between all stakeholders—local communities, developers and approving authorities—the study concludes that a sustainable balance between urban and rural/regional development is possible.

Keywords: urbanisation at the fringe, local character, sustainable urban development, bioregionalism, level of stakeholder engagement

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Abbreviations

DAC	Development Assessment Commission
DNF	decision notification form
DPTI	Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure
ERD	Environment, Resources and Development
GIS	geographic information systems
HREC	Human Research Ethics Committee
MOSS	Metropolitan Open Space System
MoU	memorandums of understanding
NRS	National Reserve System
PAR	Plan Amendment Report
PDC	principles of development control
PIA	Planning Institute Australia
SCAP	State Commissioner Assessment Panel
SHED	Sustainable Human Ecological Development
SIA	social impact assessment
SROI	social return on investment
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
VCAT	Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal
VESC	visually enhanced sustainability conversations
WGV	Willunga Garden Village
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

Chapter 1: Introduction

Cities are far from sustainable in their present form. They are a source of resource depletion, contamination and waste, and a sink that drains regions of energy, materials, water and biodiversity.

(Janis Birkeland, 'Challenging Policy Barriers in Sustainable Urban Design', 2018, p. 42)

If one could observe the growth of cities over a time lapse, one would see that most cities all over the world have been expanding outwards, encroaching on surrounding natural regions, almost like something alive with a mind of its own, like a parasite spreading out, devouring everything in its path. The reason is simple—cities grow to accommodate larger populations. Regions that were once rural become semi-urban when the city touches their edges. They then turn into suburban centres, while the city grows beyond the original rural boundaries, converting more rural areas into semi-urban and then suburban areas. Such suburban edges are constantly expanding. This phenomenon is called urbanisation of the fringe. Small cities, over a period of time, grab more and more land around the vicinity to become Greater New York, or Greater Tokyo, or Greater Sydney, or even Greater Adelaide.

The 'rural–urban fringe' is the region where urban edges meet rural boundaries and create a unique cultural landscape. Cities grow denser and upwards too, but expansion at the edges is most significant because it tends to consume valuable food production land. Concern over the loss of food production regions to urban sprawl in the UK triggered the 1938 London Green Belt Act. The rest of the developed world soon adopted this concept and worked towards setting up green belts around their cities, creating rural–urban fringes. Fringe regions become a transition zone where urban and rural lifestyles mix with a complex and dynamic character of their own. This, very often, leads to conflicts of ideas, aspirations and urban development strategies. Policymakers often face the challenge of finding ways to accommodate the growing population while setting up regulations to protect and preserve rural landscapes and rural ways of life. New homeowners have to be provided with urban infrastructure such as retail outlets, education institutions and healthcare services, along with rapid transport opportunities to reach the city centres. Local communities, who have lived in the region over generations,

relate to the region as a primarily rural landscape and strive to retain their local character, with the associated cultural significance of the region.

‘Cultural landscapes’ are organically evolved landscapes, representing the combined works of nature and human intervention. They are regions where the natural environment has been shaped by cultural practices of human beings. While the term encompasses a wide variety of natural and cultural significance to include rural settlements, religious sacred sites, manipulation of geographical structures and associated historical significance, it is more widely recognised for exhibiting cultural, heritage and aesthetic values in a region that has slowly undergone modifications over the years (Sauer 1925; Jenkins 2018; Sowinska 2017; Ash 2007; Wuisang 2014). These values associated with landscapes enable a certain sense of place among the communities that inhabit that region—people with shared beliefs, shared aspirations for the growth of their region, and shared values for protecting/preserving the existing physical features. This notion of protecting and preserving their way of life, connectedness to their surrounding natural environment, and their shared aspirations for the future allows for sustainable development principles to be adopted more readily.

Local residents, urban recreationalists and urban/regional planners all perceive ‘local character’ differently. While planners define local character by density and design guidelines (Ryan 2006; Manning et al. 2018), local residents assign value to concepts of community (Tilt, Kearney and Bradley 2007) and connection to their natural surroundings (Ziyae 2018; Claval 2005) as a key aspect of local character. Urban recreationalists and tourists, on the other hand, assign scenic beauty and aesthetics of the built environment to local character (Lindholst, Caspersen and Konijnendijk van den Bosch 2015; Vos and Meeke 1999; Di Giulio, Holderegger and Tobias 2009). This idea of local character is always challenged when urbanisation occurs, especially at the rural–urban fringe of large metropolitan cities, where urban and regional planners plan for higher density, thereby altering the pattern and aesthetics of established built environments and threatening the sense of balance between existing rural communities and the natural environments in which they live.

‘Urbanism’ is the study of urban regions—development and planning of cities, characteristics of life in cities, and most importantly the interaction between the built environment and its inhabitants. ‘Sustainable urbanism’ deals with principles of

sustainability in the context of urban design, urban planning and urban development. It explores many realms of sustainability within urban issues, such as compactness (Balsas 2017), optimal density (Lehmann 2016), city-based ecologies (Schindler et al. 2018), creating anti-fragile urban environments (Roggema 2016), mixed-use development, walkability (Long and Rice 2018), and green and liveable neighbourhoods (Florida 2014, 2016). Sustainability itself is the practice of promoting long-term capability of meeting the needs of the present without placing needs of future generations at risk (Brundtland 1987). This translates to protecting biodiversity; preserving ecosystems; not depleting exhaustible natural resources sooner than nature can replenish them; and maintaining a certain kind of balance among social, economic and environmental aspects of human life. By extension, sustainability demands the responsibility to adopt sustainable lifestyles, development plans and technological advancements by not only governments, corporations and institutions but also individuals.

However, when people do not know where their water supply comes from, how much effort has gone into making that water potable, or how far it has travelled to reach their door, there is no shared knowledge or lived experience for that person to understand the concepts of sustainability or water shortage, or reasons for reducing consumption. Higher costs of usage might be a motivation for people from lower economic strata to be careful about their consumption, but it is not enough to make a long-term impact (Church 2015; Sale 2000; Thayer 2003; Thackara 2019). The same applies to food, fuel and commodities as well as housing, infrastructure and utilities. A top-down approach to controlling consumption, urging people to adopt sustainable lifestyles and providing sustainable solutions is fraught with challenges.

‘Bioregionalism’ is a grassroots, bottom-up approach to finding sustainable ways to live within the natural confines and carrying capacity of bioregions by educating and engaging with the community (Berg 1978; Church 2014; Birkeland 2008; Downton 2002). Bioregional philosophies advocate processes such as engaging local people, making inventories of habitats and cultural practices, and developing decision-making structures that are responsive to a region’s unique cultural and biophysical characters (Birkeland 2008). The primary directive of bioregionalism is that any space occupied by human communities is not only a static, measurable, physical entity but also a socio-cultural entity. Thus, bioregionalism gives equal importance and responsibility to the aspects of

socio-cultural practices while identifying the characteristics of a region for the purpose of identity mapping or collecting data to inform urban planning and development policies and regulations.

‘Bioregional urbanism’ combines the theories of sustainable urbanism and bioregionalism, geared towards achieving awareness of human connectedness to place and finding that delicate balance between built and natural environment, urban residents and local ecology. Some scholars have relied on ideologies of bioregional urbanism to develop new models as an alternative framework for sustainable urban development (Church 2014, Birkeland 2008), while others firmly advocate a bioregional approach to urban development, especially at the fringe of metropolitan cities—where the urban–rural edges not only blur but also provide opportunities to reconnect urban and rural ecosystems through a socio-cultural, people-centric approach (Thackara 2019; Thayer 2003; Sale 2000 Berg 1978 Downton 2002).

1.1 Background and Context

In 2007, the *New York Times* declared that Adelaide, the capital city of South Australia, is ‘*the Australian version of Tuscany, except [they] have extraordinary seafood along with multiethnic population, great wine growing, good livestock, fantastic fruits and vegetables*’ (Jones 2007). According to The Economist Intelligence Unit’s Global Liveability Index 2021, Adelaide ranks third in the top 10 most liveable cities of the world. Adelaide has been in the top 10 since 2012. A free settler, well-planned, metropolitan city with a population of nearly 1.4 million¹ people from varied cultural backgrounds, blessed with beautiful sandy beaches, geologically significant ranges and home to the internationally renowned bicycling event ‘Tour Down Under’, Adelaide and its hinterland has global significance. Recognising the region’s unique landscape and cultural history and with the intention to mitigate continuing loss of productive agricultural land to urbanisation trends, in 2010, a team of local government stakeholders from South Australia set out to prepare a bid for recognition as a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) World Heritage Site. In 2012, this proposal was further supported by The Environment Institute of the University

¹ ‘As of 30 June 2021, 1.378 million people were living in the Greater Adelaide Capital City region, accounting for 77.7% of South Australia’s population’ https://plan.sa.gov.au/state_snapshot/population

of Adelaide on the premise that a World Heritage Site listing would provide a more resilient path for the region and help reverse the trends of agricultural land loss that characterise Adelaide's rural-urban fringe—trends that are a global concern (Stringer 2012; Ellis 2012).

According to population research performed in 1996, the suburbia/fringe is a major location of population growth in Australia (Stretton 2001, Bunker and Houston 2003, Buxton and Butt 2020). Fringe / peri-urban areas that are seeing rapid population growth, but as low density living, are regions with easy daily reach to urban centres and/or of 'distinct character' such as coastal areas and hill-scapes (Buxton and Butt 2020). However, low-density living in suburbia, especially at the fringes, is frowned upon by urban scholars. Suburbia has a large carbon footprint, weighs heavily on the city's infrastructure, depends hugely on private vehicles, and uses up more resources than a city centre. Yet, the fact remains that cities expand almost up to 100 km from the central business district. More and more people opt to live in suburbia, especially in America and Australia (McKenzie 1996), either for economic reasons or to fulfil the desire to have space, a house and a garden, parks, playgrounds, etc. Suburban living, although unsustainable, still remains the great Australian dream.

Suburban developments at the fringe, notably in important food production areas, present challenges, particularly if there is intent to preserve and protect those food production areas . When this is coupled with urban development policies that aim to retain local identities, be that of architectural typologies or of cultural landscape identities, a bigger challenge arises about how those policies and regulations might be framed for clarity and integrity.

This research examines the instruments of urban development practices, particularly those related to understanding and upholding 'local character'.

Although planning as a profession has its roots in solving social and economic problems of cities (post-industrial era), it has tended to evolve into a quantitative practice providing infrastructure solutions, addressing housing issues and restricting/allocating certain types of activities in specific zones. By the second half of the twentieth century urban planning was criticised as primarily a land use and zoning activity, benefiting mainly landowners and the articulate middle class (Rittel and Webber 1973), but it has continued to evolve

in recent decades into the practice of preparing policies, plans and programs within a framework of sustainable urbanism rather than infinite growth, where the focus is on the revitalisation of existing urban centres to accommodate further population growth, and new effort to capture community sentiment about what is most valued and worth sustaining in terms of urban 'liveability'.

This research explores the role of a conscious community in the negotiation of changes to their built environment and perceived impact on 'local character', through a series of case-studies of decision-making and community responses to proposed development projects in the Willunga Basin, at the fringe of metropolitan Adelaide. In particular the study will attempt to discern the emotional and social investment of the community in their local architectural identity and cultural/landscape character, and how this provokes efforts to resist perceived threats to its retention through stakeholder engagement in the development planning process.

Although 'boundaries' are seemingly central to this research, as it will examine in detail growth patterns in the fringe/transition areas on either side of the urban growth boundary, character preservation boundary, council boundary, and zoning and neighbourhood boundaries, the study is equally conscious not to limit the scope of empirical inquiry to any particular council or urban growth boundary (legislated or political boundaries). Rather, the intention is to probe a bioregional correlation between naturally defined spatial boundaries (topographical, hydrological or otherwise), and socio-culturally imagined localities or places and the built fabric in which these are made tangible and habitable.

Regulations give shape and form to the development of our cities (Imrie and Street 2009, 2011; Talen 2011), but architecture provides the building blocks of which cities are made. Undoubtedly, architecture plays an important role in the health and wellbeing of the individuals who use and inhabit it (Talen 1999), as do the streets and neighbourhoods (Badland et al. 2009; Frank 2003; Northridge, Sclar and Biswas 2003) into which buildings are organised and aggregated to make urban settlements, along with the many other elements (such as air quality, individual preferences to healthy lifestyles, access to parks and playgrounds, and busy streets) that combine to define local character and quality of urban life. Hence, grounded in the researcher's primary discipline of architecture, the present study examines the dynamic relationship between community

aspirations and urban development regulations as this is brought into focus, specifically, around questions of local character in the development of the physical architectural fabric of the urban fringe. Attempting, additionally, to enhance understanding of how these inform and influence each other; and what mechanisms are in place to achieve a healthy symbiosis of the three, the study concentrates on urbanisation challenges of the rural–urban fringe, fringe development, suburban encroachment over urban hinterlands and, most importantly, ecological/cultural symbiosis.

1.2 Overview

In the past few decades, sustainability has been the central theme of most urban development studies. Rapid urbanisation trends, especially at the fringes of major cities, affect the natural environment by disturbing the delicate balance of local ecosystems and built environment. This has triggered scholars and urban development authorities to re-examine how we approach policies around protecting the environment while making space for the growing population.

There are many mainstream environmental lobbies that focus on sustaining ecological processes and biodiversity of natural environments, leaving the process of sustainable urbanisation to urban planners (Farr 2018a, 2018b; Lehmann 2010; Beatley and Wheeler 2004). Urban landscape theory, particularly that of ecology and human habitation, is driven by discourses of sustainability. This is even more critical in vulnerable regions at rural–urban fringes.

Sustainable development is the primary concern of urban development in most developed countries in recent decades. Generally, the term sustainability can collectively be defined as ‘development without compromising the needs of future generations, and living within the carrying capacity of local areas, in order to support the eco-system by achieving equality and social justice with cultural diversity for a balanced and healthy living environment’ (Beatley 2000; Newman, Beatley, and Boyer 2009; Bulkeley and Betsill 2005; Calthorpe 2011; Campbell 1996; Farr 2008, 2018a, 2018b; Christensen, McDonald, and Denning 2012; Lehmann 2010).

Sustainable urban development concepts have three major components—environmental, economic and social sustainability (Beatley 2000; Bulkeley and Betsill 2005; Lehmann

2010; Satterthwaite 1997; Beatley and Wheeler 2004). Environmental sustainability is mainly concerned with maintaining the ecological balance between the built and natural environments by promoting biodiversity, protecting delicate ecosystems and adopting more natural elements in the built environment. Economic sustainability, on the other hand, is focused on economic growth of the city while ensuring that human and ethical factors have not been inhibited. Social sustainability, the poor cousin of the other two, deals with issues of social equity, cultural balance and diversity. However, it does not play much of a role in actualising urban development policies in the context of development strategies; choosing sites for development; applying restrictions to types of development; or determining aesthetic values, architectural typologies or connections to cultural landscapes.

Many scholars have identified and debated sustainable urban development through the concepts of ecological urbanism, eco-city, green urbanism and renewable cities. Most governments have adopted these concepts and drawn up policies and regulations to address these concerns. However, we are still a long way from identifying opportunities to engage with local communities who have valuable local knowledge of their regions, empowering them to 'tap into' their collective wisdom to inform and direct sustainable urban development by setting up appropriate mechanisms of development controls.

Howard Davis (2000), in *The Culture of Building*, states that while regulations have value in ensuring the health and resilience of a community through built forms and shared amenities, they are yet to evolve further to accommodate local socio-cultural and living practices. This research explores that notion further and in detail at the fringe of a semi-rural region of a metropolitan city in Australia. It evaluates community aspirations for the region against those of state/local government development policies and practices, and analyses connections between neighbourhoods beyond development boundaries (urban growth and character preservation district boundaries).

Building on the notions of place attachments, sense of place and cultural identities associated with a bioregion, many scholars have demonstrated that crucial connections exist between local culture and urban growth politics (Douglas 2012). Regulatory systems for managing the built environment are of many kinds—there are the rules laid out by government agencies such as ministries of housing, local councils or departments of town and country planning, and then there are those laid out by funding and insurance agencies,

testing standards, unions and local laws; further, there are cultural rules that are implicit rather than explicit, and hence more fluid in nature.

In current times, urban development policies are guided by specific sets of parameters and criteria that are tangible and measurable, such as accommodating increasing population, meeting infrastructure requirements and providing transportation facilities. While many aspects of a region, such as water sources, drainage patterns and green belts, are tangible and may be considered while drawing up development plans, the socio-cultural aspects of a region, such as cultural associations with a region, historical values, ‘touchy-feely’ practices such as gatherings for unofficial exchange of local produce, festivals, showcase of local knowledge, talents etc., and community aspirations, which are generally intangible and quite problematic to measure, are often ignored or avoided while drawing up development plans, particularly at the rural–urban fringe, where these aspects are most significant.

This research will explore how active citizen engagement—a conscious community—can play a critical role in maintaining a sustainable development path consistent with bioregional planning principles.

1.3 Research Questions

Many have critiqued the characters of cities, such as automobile-based designs (Gehl 2010), problems of zoning and land use policies (Jacobs 1992), and low social connectedness attributed to city design (Kelly et al. 2012). Neighbourliness (and sense of belonging) was one of the objectives of the 1962 ‘Metropolitan Plan for Adelaide’ (South Australia Town Planning Committee 1962). Solutions have been proposed for making cities ‘people-centric’ by, for example, designing for pedestrians and bicycles, urban spaces for people to occupy, and to make the city vibrant (Dalsgaard 2013). There are many housing projects that promote community spaces to improve interaction among residents (Downton 2002); and the notion of place identities—the relationships between people and their environment—has also been explored (Saleh 1998b, 1998c; Hester 1999; Hague and Jenkins 2004; Dovey 2009; Canizaro 2012; Heidari and Mirzaii 2013; Parsa and Torabi 2015; Targowski and Piotr 2017; Foroudi et al. 2020). However, more specific understanding of how place identities become consciously shared ideas that may be

invoked to guide decision-making in the context of urban development, especially at the fringe, is still very limited.

The present study therefore poses the following primary research question:

How does architectural identity, as a tangible component of local character, provoke the consciousness of a local community to frame sustainable urban development policies at the rural–urban fringe?

To answer this question, the regional case of the Willunga Basin will be the object of the following sub-questions:

1. How is local character recognised in urban development policies and what instruments are in place to retain it in the context of development pressure and potential conflicts at the rural–urban fringe?
2. What are the benefits and limitations of public participation tools and tactics currently in use in the Willunga Basin to mediate the interpretation of urban development policies in practice by local communities (bottom-up) as well as responsible authorities (top-down)?
3. What is the impact of the local community’s consciousness and engagement on the changing architectural and urban design norms of the region, and on its urban development policies more generally?

1.4 Aims and Objectives

1.4.1 Aim

This research explores the relationship between loss of local character and urban development policies, and in particular examines formal and informal tools of development approvals and stakeholder engagement in urban development projects, both public and private.

Community participation is of particular interest in relation to the governance that regulates this urban development, in order to understand the socio-cultural values that the local communities perceive to be invested in their understanding of local character, and how this therefore influences development policies and practices within this bioregion.

The overarching aim of this research is, therefore, to better understand the nature and significance of ‘local character’ as a form of collective local knowledge of place and region, and the role of all stakeholders—planners, developers and local communities—in the planning, management and protection of this local character in the specific bioregion of Willunga, with lessons more broadly for urbanisation at the metropolitan fringe.

1.4.2 Objectives

To address this aim, this study has three tactical case-specific objectives:

1. to analyse how urban development plans in the Willunga Basin recognise and retain architectural local character since the 1990s
2. to assess the role and effectiveness of stakeholder engagement tactics (both top-down and bottom-up) during the practical implementation of urban development policies with reference to specific projects
3. to understand the impact of a conscious community, through the analysis of specific projects and the resultant amendments to the designs, which have shaped the architectural and urban design of the Willunga Basin

1.5 Significance

This research could be expected to have a substantial impact on future sustainable urban research in the context of framing policies and regulations around community engagement. It addresses a gap in sustainable urban development, which often fails to capture socio-cultural aspects of urban development in meaningful ways, particularly in rural–urban fringe areas. Therefore, this research might assist urban researchers, urban planners, policymakers, architects, urban designers and developers to make informed decisions for urban development projects—by not only taking into consideration the aesthetics of the built environment and environmental aspects, but also understanding and catering to the aspirations and socio-cultural values of local communities, who know their region best.

This research contributes to a better understanding of local communities and their intimate relationship with their particular regional context, it explores the social aspect of sustainable development, with the premise that communities with a sense of belonging to a particular region will embrace the concepts of sustainable development more readily

and strive to protect the delicate balance with their immediate natural environment. Understanding the dynamics between a local community and their governing agencies will provide a valuable insight into framing policies that are better equipped to achieve sustainable urban development goals. Learning from a community that is already firmly invested in retaining its local character, cultural landscape, semi-urban lifestyle practices and sustainable development, and analysing the methods by which it engages with the governing agencies/authorities directing urban development in a way that is acceptable to its core values, will inform the larger knowledge base and set new standards for community engagement practices elsewhere.

The main concern of urban development authorities is to accommodate growing populations and provide utilities and urban infrastructure. However, it is becoming increasingly important to engage with local communities and gain an insight into local knowledge of the land, ecology, cultures and social values before framing sustainable urban development policies. This study investigates, analyses, synthesises and shares the findings of the dynamics through which highly alert communities engage with urban development authorities. Lessons learnt here can then be applied to other regions as policies around community engagement practices to educate less engaged populations, with a top-down approach, but with the intention of stimulating bottom-up change.

Understanding the impact of zoning regulations and building codes on a community's socio-cultural practices enables policymakers and planners to improve them to suit local needs. As Dolores Hayden (Groth and Bressi 1997) puts it, understanding the history of urban landscapes (along with the social and economic fabric) offers a basis for making political and aesthetic choices about the future. It also promotes greater social responsibility by practitioners in design fields.

Historically, zoning policies and development regulations have evolved over time as a way to resolve issues of overcrowding and to improve public health and sanitation of post-industrial cities. Zoning controls, building form and placement, and architectural typologies (sometimes) are applied uniformly in a certain zone meant for a specific use. Howard Davis (2000) argues that these regulations control buildings through uniform requirements stated numerically and do not state intentions. In doing so, there is no room for judgement based on neighbourly negotiations and/or notions of a shared sense of place. This leads to development standards that may or may not be sensitive to local

cultures and living practices, especially when these standards have been derived from seemingly successful global trends elsewhere. This research will therefore contribute evidence toward the argument that planning policies and development regulations should, ideally, be defined less by uniform standards and more holistically by local knowledge of climate, ecology, economy and the socio-cultural practices of local communities (Vidyarthi 2010).

Urban development policies and practices matter. They can have long-term, sometimes permanent impact, in terms of change or conservation, on both built and natural environments. Accordingly, the effective implementation of such policies is crucial if the significance and agency of ‘local character’ in regional and peri-urban development processes is to be maintained. For example, as seen in this research later, in the case of Willunga High Street upgrade project, one of the guiding principles for Mulloway Studio (architects) was to engage with narrative history of both Aboriginal and European; and to focus on the significance of Willunga as a community with design elements that provoke the viewer into asking questions about the place and its people.

This research will contribute to planning knowledge and practice by enhancing evidence-based understanding of citizen involvement in urban development approval processes. By focusing, through an architectural lens, on changes in built form that result directly from urbanisation and development policies intended to retain local character at the rural–urban fringe, it seeks to better articulate the relationship between development regulations and local living practices. This knowledge will inform planners and policymakers about the possible implications of their regulations on socio-cultural practices that have not been documented or analysed from this perspective before.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

There are various theories on how the built environment can be manipulated to improve the health and safety of its inhabitants: the institutional approach, decentralisation (Coursey 1977; Carlos and Trono 2020; Diaz-Lanchas and Mulder 2021), ecological planning strategies (McHarg 1981), bioregionalism (Tonn, English, and Turner 2005), the integrated and participatory approach (Hague and Jenkins 2004), learning from the vernacular (Alexander 1977,1979; Fathy 1986, 2010; Oliver 1996, 2006), the socialist

stance (Greed 1999, Jacobs 1961), the cultural approach (Young 2008) and positive development strategies (Birkeland 2008).

Positive development strategies recommend that urban planners and designers should not just try to reduce the negative impacts of the popular form of urban growth but implement new ways of living which will not only stop the depletion and degradation of natural resources, but give back to nature more than it takes (Birkeland 2008). According to Birkeland (2008), the aim of net positive development is to take affirmative action to make environmental improvements that go beyond remediation and restoration. Air, water, soil and people could leave the building in a healthier condition than when they entered it. Buildings could also add social and ecological value, on-and/or off-site, to 'over-compensate' for any embodied or ecological waste. Recognition of ecological and cultural linkages across landscapes is critically important in planning sustainable use, establishing reserves and coordinating conservation efforts throughout the bioregion (Weller and Bolleter 2013; Brunckhorst, 2000). Such links may seem obvious, but there is a need to put in place a management system that recognises human links to natural processes and cultural realities. This leads to the theory of adapting a bioregional approach to urban development strategies to achieve positive development goals. Bioregionalism, understood simply, classifies a given region as a place whereby the social and ecological aspects function as one unit, and where the future of sustainability becomes harmonious and congruent (Bruckhorst 2000).

Considering the particular issues and agencies at play in the present research, this study adopts the theoretical framework inherent in bioregionalism to develop sustainable built environments.

Kirkpatrick Sale (2000, p. 42) defines bioregionalism as follows:

A movement..... to understand the place, the immediate specific place where we live. The kinds of soils and rocks under the feet; the source of waters we drink; the meaning of the different kinds of winds.... the limits of the resources of the land, the carrying capacities of the lands and waters, the places where it must not be stressed, the place where its bounties can be developed, the treasures it holds and the treasures it withholds..... the cultures of the people, of the population native to the land and the human social and economic arrangements in both urban and rural settings...

Terence Young (2000, p. 48) describes the key object of inquiry, the “bioregion”, as follows:

If one were to envision a bioregion as a place where people dwell, rather than a place they co-incidentally occupy, then it is possible to imagine that everything within the region is natural, including the people. Everything is where it belongs, nothing is out-of-place and a natural harmonious relationship predominates between people and the ecosystem. Thus, the nature–culture dichotomy, the root cause of modern problems, disappears in a bioregion.

A bioregionalist approach strongly emphasises the symbiotic relationship between human settlements and their natural surroundings. Bioregionalism encompasses the concept that a region can claim a unique identity with respect to not only its geographical and ecological features but also the human habitats within the region. The local community’s cultural and social wealth, living practices, and their relationship with their immediate surroundings is considered an important factor that can be uniquely identified in a bioregion.

These theories of bioregional urbanism as a new urban development paradigm are further discussed in detail in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

1.7 Research Scope: Willunga Basin

The Willunga Basin, at the southern fringe of metropolitan Adelaide in South Australia, has been identified as an appropriate context for this research as it manifests a strong bottom-up approach in local planning politics and processes to manage and protect its cultural landscape. This study portrays the successes and failures of urban development amidst character preservation efforts in relation to the bioregion. Engaging the concept of ‘bioregional urbanism’ as a frame of analysis, this research examines the Willunga Basin from historical and contemporary points of view, examining urban development trends in the region in relation to theory, design, governing policies and practices, to explore the premise that distinctive cultural landscapes such as Willunga Basin could be explained as exemplary bioregions. The rationale for selecting Willunga as an ideal place to conduct this research and the characteristics that make Willunga an exemplary bioregion are outlined in the following sections, and explained in further detail in Chapter 5.

1.7.1 Why Willunga? Rationale for Selection

As a distinctive agricultural valley in the southern hinterland of Greater Adelaide, Willunga has successfully resisted urban development through the history of European settlement in South Australia. A large part of the basin is now recognised under character preservation district regulations (introduced in 2011) as a key part of a larger zone incorporating the Willunga Basin, Mount Lofty Ranges and the Barossa Valley. This region was also the focus of a bid to UNESCO for international recognition as a cultural landscape of World Heritage status. However, a significant part of the region has been identified for urban growth. The urban growth boundary runs along an important road (South Road), which runs north–south; towards the east is the character preservation district and to the west is the land facing rapid urbanisation.

Figure 1.1 shows the location of Willunga Basin in the context of Australia. Figure 1.2 locates Willunga Basin in South Australia. Figure 1.3 depicts the boundary of Willunga Basin at the fringe of Adelaide metropolitan, wedged between to the sea on the south and west, hills on the east and the river on the north.



Figure 1.1: Locating Willunga Basin in the Australian context
(Source: Marked up Google maps image)



Figure 1.2: Locating Willunga Basin in South Australia
(Source: Marked up Google maps image)

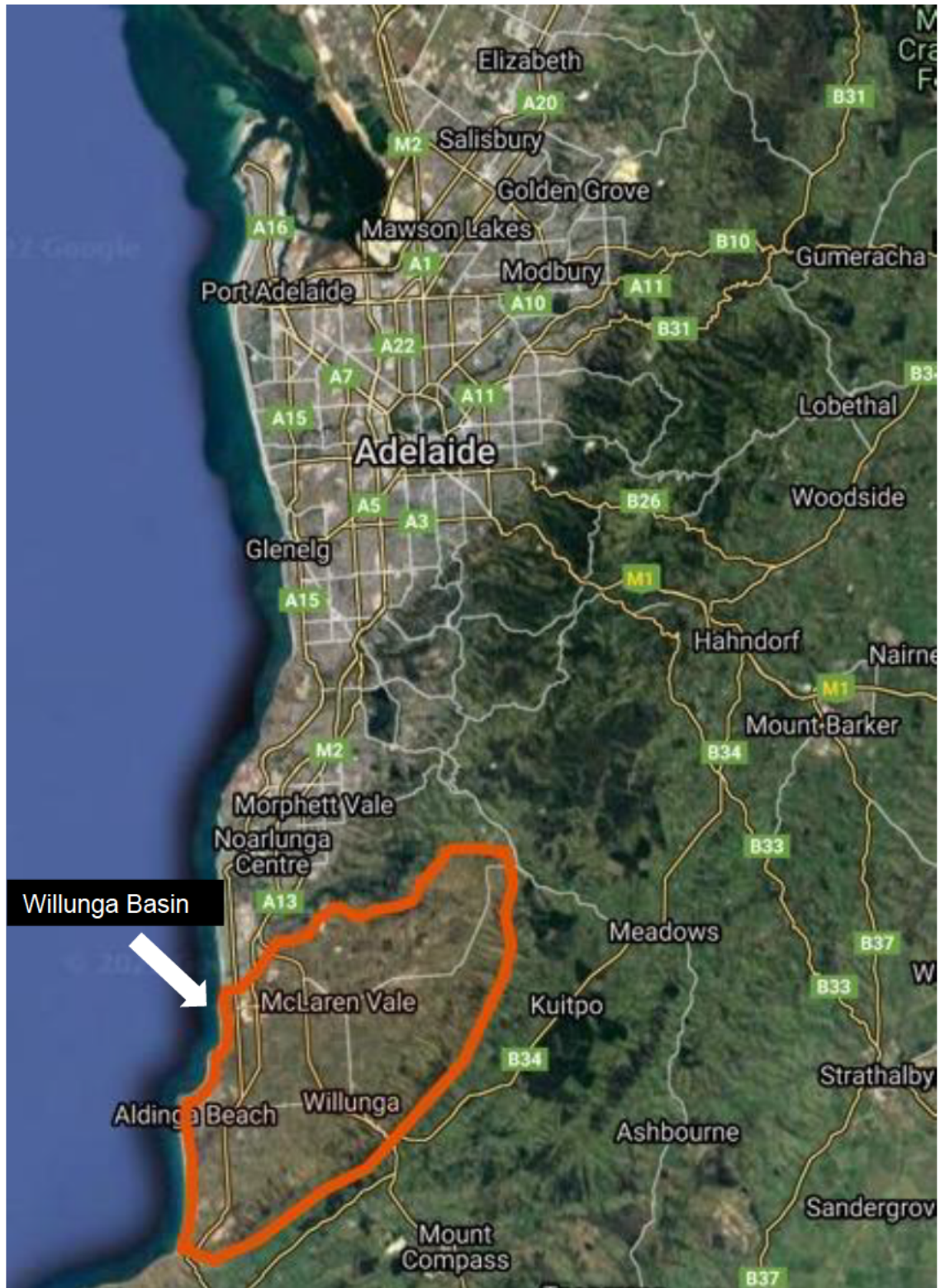


Figure 1.3: Willunga Basin at the Fringe of Adelaide Metropolitan

(Source: Marked up Google maps image)

The Willunga community has exhibited strong sentiments of environmental sustainability and preservation of unique local character (as will be seen in later chapters), and a systematic community activism against unsolicited urban growth within the region. It is

viewed as being averse to suburbanisation of the region; similar to the case of Davis in California, USA (Douglas 2012), they are seen as having a fundamental antipathy to ‘growth’ and ‘flex political muscle’ in shaping urban development projects that fit more with their ideas of urban growth and preservation of local character.

1.7.2 Rationale of Multiple Case Studies in One Bioregion

Existing studies focusing on bioregionalism tend to compare multiple regions (bioregions) across the world, but generally such studies fail to provide a holistic view of the threats to bioregionalism. To understand the threats to bioregionalism, this study concentrates on multiple instances of local character that is vulnerable, in one particular locality.

Different types of development projects are explored across a timeline of the last three decades to give a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of urban development policies, as well as a detailed analysis of community participation methods adopted in each of these projects. The projects include housing layouts, commercial establishments, and streetscape projects (urban design). The focus, here, on development in the Willunga Basin has enabled consideration of several types of projects. If several different regions had been studied, then this current study would have been limited to one or two types of development. This would have risked missing out on capturing crucial data on socio-cultural values that may only be discernible across different types of development ranging from planning of a housing layout (figure 1.4); architectural identities (figure 1.5); to streetscapes and art installations in the public realm (figure 1.6 and 1.7) meant to provoke queries on history of the place and its people.



Figure 1.4: Living at the edges – Aldinga Sunday Estate (Google Maps)



Figure 1.5 Rammed Earth Dwelling in Willunga Garden Village
(Source: Author)



Figure 1.6 Streetscape - Willunga High Street
(Source: Author)



Figure 1.7 Installations in the public realm Willunga High Street
 (Source: Author)

Adopting the strategy of conducting a vertical study of a single region, instead of a horizontal comparative study of multiple regions, enables this research to take on a detailed analysis of formal and informal community engagement practices.

1.8 Methodology

1.8.1 Strategy

This research employs a mixed methodology to investigate urban development policies and practices, along with community engagement patterns that were observed through primary research conducted in the Willunga Basin. The system of enquiry relies heavily on qualitative methods adopted from many disciplines, including social, architectural, urban planning and anthropological studies, and further strengthened by in-depth case studies, interpretive historical research and correlational research. Multiple strategies, data types and data sources have been used.

This research explores ethnographic ways of knowing and learning, and arguably runs the risk of being extremely subjective, particularly as it is based on just one bioregion. To reduce this risk, a mixed method approach is adopted for the investigations. Apart from

semi-structured interviews and anecdotal evidence, the study includes an exhaustive examination of maps, images, government records, archival materials, official project files and policy/regulatory instruments. Through these exhaustive methods, the research seeks to provide multifactorial explanations—physical, environmental, socio-cultural, political and legal aspects of urban development at the fringe of metropolitan cities.

After a pilot tour of the region engaging with local communities, six specific development projects were chosen for detailed analysis. These projects cover a wide range of project types, policies, community voices, situations and outcomes, including housing layouts, retail outlets, streetscapes and a new multi-storey building proposal.

The study closely scrutinised community engagement exercises that local councils conduct to plan and develop the local region, keeping in mind people’s visions and aspirations for their future. The study also analysed informal tools used by proactive communities to direct the development of their bioregion.

1.8.2 Tactics

The following tactics were employed to collect and analyse data:

1. literature reviews
 - a. theories around urban awareness, regionalism, local character and place identities, particularly the socio-cultural dynamics at rural–urban fringes of rapidly urbanising metropolitan cities
 - b. theories around participatory approaches to urban development, recognising needs, framing policies, and structure and methods of public participation
 - c. theories and multiple facets of bioregional urbanism since the 1970s, particularly focusing on the people-centric approach towards sustainable urban development theories and practices
2. pilot study of the region to assess appropriateness of selection—driving around the Willunga Basin, attending local community events and markets, and making informal connections with people in the region
3. co-relational enquiry through archival maps and documents relating to the region from the State Library, South Australia

4. detailed analysis of policies, rules, regulations and guidelines related to urban planning and development of the region, accessed from the local council office (City of Onkaparinga) and archives from local libraries (Aldinga, Willunga and Noarlunga Libraries)
5. archival investigation of community participation practices through library archives and media articles
6. advertising, recruiting and conducting semi-structured interviews with local residents and discussing their perceptions of major development in the region, their level of engagement in the process of community consultation, their understanding of local character, and their aspirations for the development of the region
7. case studies of six projects within the region since the 1990s—requesting access to documents from the local council (City of Onkaparinga): development applications, relevant communications, panel meeting minutes, community engagement methods and outcomes, iterations/resubmissions of development applications, decision notification forms (DNFs), and final outcomes.

A more detailed description and discussion of these strategies and tactics is provided in Chapter 6.

1.9 Thesis Structure

This thesis is organised into nine chapters (figure 1.7). The present chapter (1) introduces the reader to this research. The chapter begins with research context, background, overview, rationale, contribution to discipline and research aims, objectives and questions. The rest of the thesis is divided into three main parts:

Part One (Literature Review) identifies gaps in knowledge based on literature review of the relationship between socio-cultural aspects of urbanisation at the fringe (Chapter 2), participatory approaches (Chapter 3) and bioregionalism as a theoretical framework (Chapter 4). Chapters 2 and 3 establish observable trends and concerns around urban awareness, local character, conflict at the rural-urban fringe of metropolitan cities, barriers to public participation and the role of local governments in engaging the public.

Chapter 3 presents the philosophical position of bioregionalism, identifying place attachment and land ethics as a bioregional mandate at grassroots level.

Part Two (Research Design and Study of Willunga Basin) details the context of this research in the case of the Willunga Basin (Chapter 5), case-specific research questions, methodology, and specific strategies and tactics employed (Chapter 6). Chapter 5 ascertains the importance of grounding this research in Willunga Basin observed in early settlement; pride, hopes and desires expressed by local communities, recognising cultural landscape values and resisting urban sprawl through grassroots organisations and evidence of their activism. Chapter 5 rationalises the research questions, methodology and research tactics used to conduct this research.

Part Three (Findings and Analysis) describes, analyses, and discusses the original findings of the thesis. Chapter 7 outlines the details and objective findings of the six representative case studies of community engagement, process, and outcomes in recent development projects in the Willunga Basin. Chapter 8 then discusses these developments with reference to the additional research findings and the principles of bioregional urbanism, and Chapter 9 presents the conclusions and recommendations for further study.

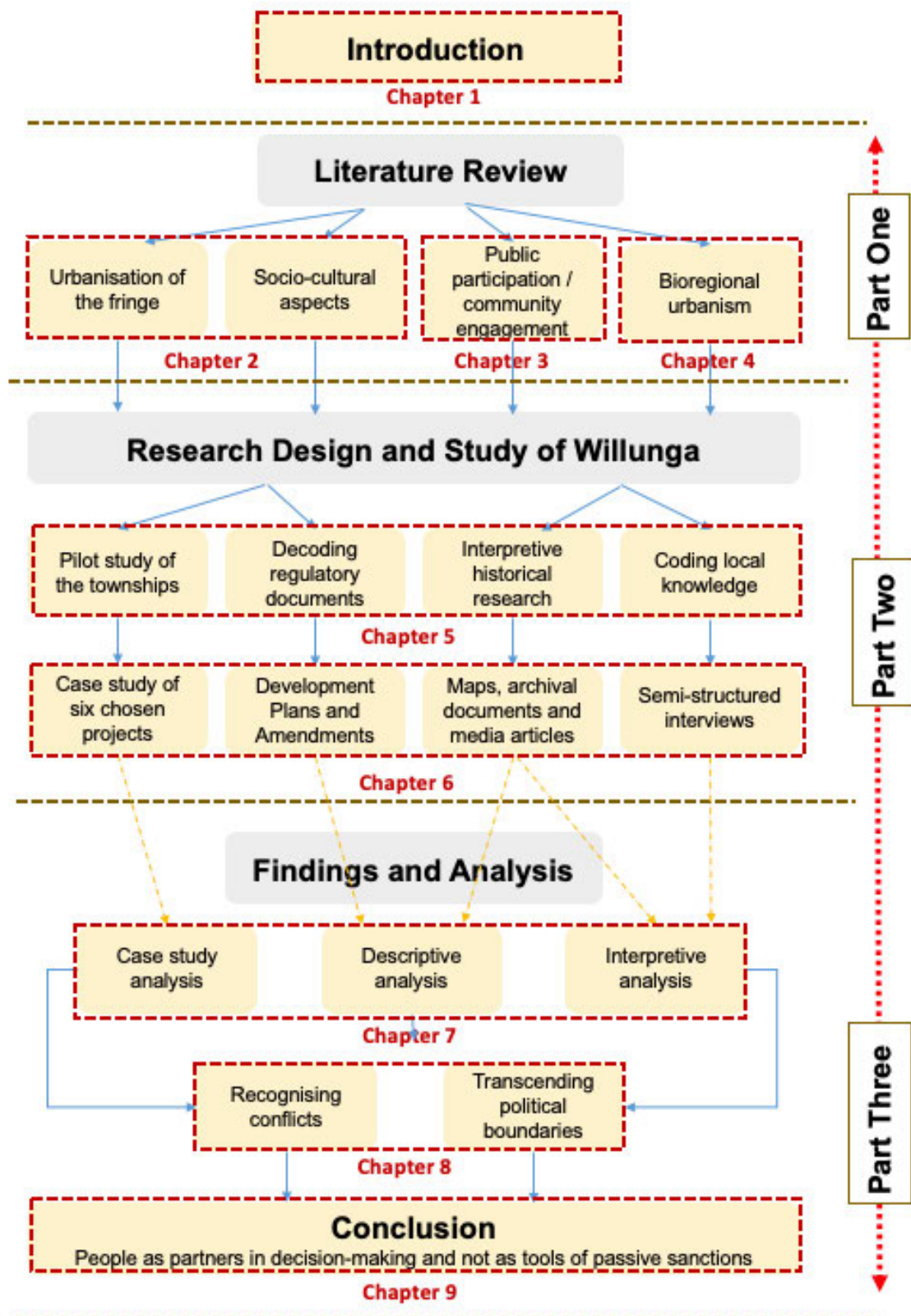


Figure 1.8: Visual representation of the thesis

Part One

Literature Review

Cities, and their neighbourhoods, are complex entities that weave together the physical components of the built environment, and the social interactions of the citizens that inhabit them. Yet, the study of cities does not belong to a unified stream of literature, but largely to two parallel branches. On the one hand, we have the literature advanced by urban planners and architects, and on the other, we have the literature advanced by social scientists and natural scientists.

(Salesses, Schechtner and Hidalgo, 'The Collaborative Image of the City', 2013, p. 2)

The primary aim of Part One is to review existing relevant literature, identify the gaps and establish a theoretical framework within which the research is conducted. In an endeavour to establish a relationship between urban growth at the fringe and principles of bioregional urbanism, this research conducts a review of literature in three main areas. In *Socio-cultural aspects of Urbanisation at the Fringe* (Chapter 2), the diverse and complex factors that impact on urbanisation at the fringe are presented in a systematic way which sets out the parameters that motivate the theoretical framing presented in the subsequent two chapters. The practical implications of *Participatory Approaches to Urban Development* are then presented (Chapter 3), with specific emphasis on how people engage with the practice of urban development. This is followed by a review of the metatheory of *Bioregionalism* (Chapter 4), the philosophical position of this research.

Chapter 2: Socio-cultural Aspects of Urbanisation at the Fringe

Urban studies attract multidisciplinary attention. Apart from architects, planners and urban designers, who are directly involved in shaping the built environment, there has been interest in the field of urban studies by lawyers, anthropologists, geographers, social scientists, financial experts and even psychologists. Urban development policies and practice, which encompass land use guidelines, zoning laws, building design codes, urban design elements, streetscapes and housing layouts, are studied in relation to the socio-cultural impact on people and their lifestyles—for example, lawyers reviewing the impact of zoning on house designs and work-place imbalance, family rhythms, and 4-day work week cultures (Silbaugh 2010, 2007); architects/ethnographers proposing a representational model for studying images, bodies and buildings as cultural ‘systems of inscription’ (Roesler 1966; Roesler 2012, 2014); clinical psychologists studying the importance of neighbourhoods and social support systems to maintain mental health; and co-relating tangible physical elements of the urban environment, such as house forms, location, plazas and physical accesses, to sociological theories of interaction and relationships (Sommer 1983).

Concern over losing important farming land to urban sprawl, changing patterns of land use in rural settlements close to cities, and the disintegrated nature of knowledge of spaces that form the rural–urban fringe has triggered a considerable body of literature by geographers and planners since the 1930s (Scott et al. 2013; Bittner and Sofer 2013; Gant, Robinson and Fazal 2011). Studies from across the world, demonstrate that urban development often leads to conflict over land use, particularly at the rural–urban fringe, accommodating people with a variety of social-demographic backgrounds with competing priorities, which in turn, shape the landscape and architectural typologies (Thornes and Slater 2016; Bedini and Bronzini 2016; Wang, Hu and Zhu 2016; Pacione 2013).

This chapter analyses the representation of socio-cultural aspects of urbanisation at the fringe in the existing literature related to urban development policies. It begins with an exploration of the various influences that define the form of a city/neighbourhood,

features that define neighbourhood and community character, physical characteristics that nurture social connections in a city or neighbourhood, literature treating urban sprawl, and finally laws and codes pertaining to urban growth boundaries and character preservation.

2.1 Forces that Define Form

... the house form is not simply the result of physical forces or any single causal factor, but is the consequence of a whole range of socio-cultural factors seen in their broadest terms. (Amos Rapoport, House Form and Culture, 1969, p. 47)

Echoing the same ideology, Howard Davis (2000) defines buildings as ‘products of social processes’ with a complex series of sub-processes: the decision to build; choosing the site; regulating character and placement; financing construction; design; materials; construction; regulation of construction; and occupying, using and modifying. Drawing from this same concept and applying it to the process of urbanisation of the fringe, the sub-processes would probably read like this: stimuli for growth; decisions about which land to earmark for urban growth; regulating character and land use zones; economic factors that promote growth; design proposals: materials; construction/development; regulation of development; and occupying, using and modifying.

This research focuses on the third sub-process in this urban development process—regulating the character of development through land use zoning and development guidelines. This study explores how these regulations and guidelines affect the socio-cultural fabric of the communities who live in and around these buildings and zones marked for urban growth.

Buildings result from social needs and accommodate a variety of functions—economic, social, political, religious, and cultural. Their size, appearance, location, and form are governed not simply by physical factors such as climate, materials or topography, but by a society’s ideas, its forms of economic and social organization, its distribution of resources and authority, its activities and beliefs and values which prevail at any one period of time. (King, 1980, p.11)

There are many studies that identify the main driver that creates form, including economic factors, architects’ fantasies, governance, historical influences, geography, technology,

available resources and cultural identities (Etherington 2021; Carmona 2016; Angheluță and Badea 2018; Peris-Ortiz, Bennett and Pérez-Bustamante Yábar 2017; Chen 2016; Bunker 2015; Neill 2004). While these drivers are significant, this emphasis on one single factor, can overlook the fact that built forms, especially dwellings and settlements, are a result of a very complex set of systems and forces.

2.1.1 Socio-cultural Values

...while in every society, economic and political power is a major –probably the major - factor explaining the actual form of built environment, the way such power is expressed varies from culture to culture.

(Anthony King, *Buildings and Society: Essays on the Social Development of the Built Environment*, 1984, p. 11)

The built environment is essentially a product of socio-cultural values of the communities that inhabit a region and economic outcomes of political intent (King 1980, 1984, 1990; Lawrence and Low 1990; Saleh 2002, 2002b, 2004). Socio-cultural values are shared patterns of attitudes and behaviour of community groups. This research examines communities living in a particular region and their shared expectations, guidelines and rules that guide the development of their region. While socio-cultural norms are generally unwritten rules of social behaviour, they are quite valuable in understanding the community sentiments, aspirations and approaches. This is particularly useful when it comes to designing built environments for communities. Understanding local socio-cultural practices, what people value, what they identify with, and how they would like their built environment to be developed will go a long way in gaining the confidence of local communities. Understanding cultural norms also provides valuable opportunities for planners, designers, architects and governing institutions in guiding the direction of urban growth.

In comparing something as simple as setback dimensions for single family dwellings between UK and Australia, it is quite evident that cultural norms are regional and dictated by socio-cultural aspirations. For example, in the UK, it would be unheard of for residential backyards to be less than 10 metres deep, resulting in a distance of at least 20 metres between the rear facades of each house. Meanwhile, in Australia, a century ago, a substantial backyard was a notable feature of the suburban houses (Hall 2010).

However, with new planning policies in place (Hamnett and Kellett 2018) the backyards started to shrink in size from the early 1990s (Hall 2010). In recent trends the majority of dwellings have a rear setback of about 2–3 metres. That kind of minimal space between rear facades would still be shocking to people and considered an invasion of privacy in the UK, whereas in Australia, this minimal space is quite acceptable culturally. On the other hand, Australians would object to fewer than two or three car parks on their suburban properties, while in the UK, they are considered lucky if they have one car park per dwelling.

Thus, it is important to be culturally sensitive to planning and building norms in the region. Who best to provide appropriate insight than the community that has local knowledge of the region, especially the intangible types of knowledge? Hence, public participation in matters of urban development is essential, which is discussed in detail in the next chapter—participatory approaches for urban development.

Howard Davis (2000) discusses in detail implicit social rules and their effect on the vernacular form of local districts in Islamic cities. Many of the rules are rooted in their social and religious structures, some in safety and available building technologies. The rules were based on intention, not numbers, and required that attention be paid to the immediate context of building. These regulations that came out of social norms created a coherent district (Davis 2000).

These built forms, deriving from social norms, contributed to the character of many pre-industrial cities, and it can be safely argued that vernacular building practices were best suited for that region and for that community. However, with globalisation and urbanisation trends, these forms are rapidly changing (Saleh 2002). New rules and regulations are being put in place to meet the demands of the growing population, environmental concerns, infrastructure needs and the changing aspirations of the people themselves. These regulations are of different types and managed by different agencies.

A considerable amount of anthropological research focuses on the study of the built environment, where the built environment is viewed as an integral part of social life, as a way to express social organisation, structure and symbolic orders—tracing ethnographic approaches, cultural and anthropology approaches, and architectural interest in employing theories of culture to interpret built forms (King 1984, 1990; Lawrence and

Low 1990). When built forms are interpreted using ethnographic approaches, not only are the use and meanings explored, but also materials, techniques and structural systems. Accordingly, anthropological studies often interpret built forms as metaphors for complex social and symbiotic relationships, along with the use and meanings of materiality.

2.1.2 Cultural Landscapes: Practices and Expectations

Urban development policies intend to include cultural aspects, but in practice, little attention is paid to local cultures, leading to projects being planned and executed as though they were in a vacuum (Douglas 2012). However, urban development does not take place in a vacuum; the socio-cultural impacts can be significant.

The ‘culture’ of any given place affects its building styles and character as much as it affects the natural surroundings. To support this argument, Rapoport takes the example of the Parthenon, which without the context of the Acropolis is like looking at a dwelling without looking at its yard, streets, village, or fields. This kind of place-based planning is significant to this day, even when knowledge about the potential and relevance within such places is limited (Hall and Ward 2014; Rapoport 1992).

Cultural landscapes are regions that have been sculpted by human land use practices (Vlami et al. 2017), coming into popular use in the 1990s, with the intention to protect and conserve these culturally important regions (Palang and Fry 2011) and adopted by many disciplines, including geographers, regional planners, archaeologists, and social scientists (Stretton 1989; Ash 2007; Cullotta and Barbera 2011; Nunta and Sahachaisaeree 2010).

The concept of ‘Cultural landscape’ was first defined as ‘fashioned from natural landscape by a cultural group’ (Sauer 1925), later described as an ‘aesthetic way of looking at the environment’ (Cosgrove 1984) and expressed as ‘combined works of nature and man’ (UNESCO 2008). Other definitions exist, which comprise ‘geographic area, including both cultural and natural resources, associated with a historic event, activity, or person and exhibiting cultural and aesthetic values’ (Nunta and Sahachaisaeree 2010) and ‘role of human in making changes to physical surfaces of the land’ (M. Jones 2003). Thus, it is primarily a study of the relationship between location and human settlements.

In the context of ‘cultural planning’, generally regarded as a strategy for dealing with rural challenges and urban settings, culture becomes a marginal add-on rather than taking the lead in shaping the technicalities of urban planning and development at the rural–urban fringe (Cruickshank 2018). One of the aims of cultural planning through cultural landscapes also focuses on shaping the physical landscape to provide meaning to the features—especially relating to memories, myths and other beliefs attached to the place, thus creating new ecological relationships of the community to its immediate region (Saleh 2000).

2.1.3 Urban Ideals and Place Identities

Over the last century, there have been a succession of urban ideals—Le Corbusier promoted an urban community of stark high-rise buildings, while Frank Lloyd Wright envisioned Broadacre City, a low-density community largely dependent on automobiles; Paolo Soleri advocated that whole cities be created as a single building (Kendig, Kendig and Keast 2010). Although diverse in nature, all these approaches are rigid and do not take into account people’s aspirations for a full range of physical environments that suit their existing lifestyle practices.

Urbanism is the characteristic way of life of city dwellers. The process of urbanisation invariably changes lifestyles and living practices. All over the world and especially in developing countries, many small towns, peri-urban settlements and rural societies located on the fringe of large cities are undergoing rapid urbanisation trends. Inhabitants of these settlements are faced with the challenges of lifestyle changes and adaptations.

Globalisation produces similar urban areas all over the world. However, when one starts to give importance to local identities, landscape usually comes to the rescue, becoming the meeting ground for natural and cultural values and playing an important role in shaping local, regional and national identities (Palang and Fry 2011; Lynch and Rodwin 1958). However, sometimes it is not just the scenic locale or architectural typologies that create a ‘sense of place’, but rather the people themselves who create a sense of a ‘good place to live’ shaped by common lifestyles and values leading to a strong sense of belonging to the community and place (Salamon 2003).

At any given point in time, an urban environment with its buildings, spaces and materiality is all very static, but our interaction with it is dynamic (Day 2014). A sense of belonging and a sense of space comes from this interaction. It comes from the experience of the environment—an environment that includes people, climate and also the space that they inhabit. If there is a sense of a lack of belonging, humans tend to explore new ‘spaces’ to feel harmonious with their place. Whenever we build something new, we have a responsibility to the spirit of the place (Day 2014). There needs to be a dialogue between space and its inhabitants.

Place identities stem from socio-cultural characteristics that manifest in physical shapes and forms of the built environment (Ziyae 2018). There is a need to design and shape policies for urban development where all aspects of social and physical use are taken into account. People tend to choose settings that mean something to them as community places. They must offer them comfort and pleasure through different amenities and have elements that are significant to the users. There is an urgent need for developers, designers and policymakers to make note of this aspect and find graceful ways to incorporate it in development proposals, especially at the rural–urban fringe of metropolitan cities.

2.1.4 Codes and Regulations

A well-intentioned rule that is written for a particular, singular constituency is not necessarily the best, when examined from the point of view of the culture and built world as a whole.

(Howard Davis, *The Culture of Building*, 2000, p. 217)

Every society has rules by which they build their dwellings and neighbourhoods. After World War II, and taking cues from rapid rebuilding initiatives in the United Kingdom, more and more countries started to draw up explicit codes to control how and where buildings could be built. While most of the rules, codes and regulations are explicit, some rules are implicit, often based on traditions, socio-cultural belief systems or neighbourly behaviour, and thus difficult to codify.

In contemporary industrial societies, the first level of control on built forms is by rules that establish building lines, setbacks and lot coverage, and by rules that relate to street width, building type or building height. There are rules that control facade embellishment and window sizes (Talen 2011). These rules are an indirect outcome of other objectives

such as traffic flow, fire prevention, public health, parking provision, equal access to light and ventilation, ability to provide infrastructure (e.g. electrical supply lines, water supply and drainage systems, and networking), and many other factors.

Regulations are highly influential in shaping urban places and architectural forms. The urban world is a highly regulated place, where almost every parcel of land has a predetermined planning and building code guiding how the land will be used, what can or cannot be built, building height, mass, spacing and aesthetics, which defines the form and character of the city (Imrie and Street 2009). Apart from regulations, there are other forces that shape urban development, such as economic factors that developers foresee, insurance companies that prepare risk assessments, non-government organisations with larger socio-cultural visions, political interdependencies, and a network of relational and socio-institutional factors (Haines, Sutton and Platania-Phung 2008; Baer 1997; Bentley 2019; Hawkesworth and Imrie 2009; Mackenzie and Martinez Lucio 2005).

While it could be said that codes and regulations play ‘a positive role in attaining urban character’ (Dovey, Woodcock and Wood 2009a), others could argue that imposing standards with ‘disregard to environmental conditions and locale’ (Eran 2005) only leads to undesirable outcomes. Yet others emphasise the importance of understanding socio-cultural relations (Davis 2000; Rapoport 1969; Imrie and Street 2009) to avoid the dangers of ‘fetishising design’ (Knox 1984) by giving too much importance to physical form and losing sight of the context which can contribute to the meaning of buildings.

While there is no doubt that regulations play a huge role in shaping urban places and architectural form (Marantz and Ben-Joseph 2011; Charney 2007; Duany and Talen 2002a; Eran 2005; Talen 2011; Davis 2000; Carmona 2016; Visscher and Meijer 2007; Wee 2007) (Fisher and Guy, *Urban Studies*, March 2009 Special Issue), there is nothing to ensure that these regulations take into account other factors that affect the region’s cultural landscape, local socio-cultural practices, aspirations, sustainable development factors, and ways to enhance the region’s ecology.

In Australia, particularly in Melbourne in the 1990s, prescriptive regulations were replaced by ‘desired urban character’ guidelines. In the case of an innovative housing project proposed for a former industrial site in the inner-city suburb Fitzroy, these ‘desired characters’ were debated, disputed and argued over by local communities,

architects/developers and the state authorities in the planning tribunal, media and resistance campaigns. These debates were a product of different ‘desires’—the local community preferred to limit changes and conserve valued neighbourhoods; architects wished to add new character to the city; developers sought to build bigger buildings to maximise profits; the market (new occupants) desired good infrastructure and valued vantage views; state planners desired to establish higher density to accommodate an increasing population (Dovey, Woodcock and Wood 2009a). While the state’s desire won the debate, which supported the architect, developer and perhaps the new occupants, it is evident that the local community was disgruntled. Dovey et al. were commissioned to study six such developments to understand ‘what is urban character?’ Their studies ranged from housing projects of increasing density in inner city suburbs to infrastructure projects in middle-ring suburbs.

Planning codes and commissioned studies generally try to categorise character into a set of formal physical elements. The way character is experienced in everyday life does not allow it to be differentiated from social and physical aspects of a neighbourhood. Literature around neighbourhood and community character is explored in more detail in the next section.

Other scholars have studied the impact of regulations on city forms. Emily Talen (2011) examined and compared how zoning laws and building codes changed the skyline of Miami and Gold Coast. Saleh (1998) investigated how regulations, combined with social aspirations to imitate the West, along with technological advances, quickly transformed traditional settlements in Saudi Arabia.

Code of the City by Ben-Joseph Eran (2005) is a vital study which provides insight into the subtle forces of norms, standards and codes that shape our cities. Divided into three sections, it first traces the history of rules and social values that shaped the ancient cities of Indus Valley, Byzantium, Rome and Islamic cities, and the later scientific and technological advancements that shaped how land was measured, used and controlled. The second section looks at how standards have become urban conventions and explores the impacts of standards and regulations on neighbourhoods. While there seems to be more importance given to the opinions of developers (who are generally critical of regulations), the book does call for other players who shape the cities, such as architects, town planners and engineers, to challenge ineffective regulatory frameworks. Place-based

criteria in response to local contexts is emphasised strongly. The last section describes a shift in regulatory paradigms coming from new areas, such as environmental awareness, public/private partnerships, sustainability, mobility issues and energy efficiency. Although this is an important study to understand the role of regulatory frameworks in shaping the built environment, it does not address current social values, climatic needs or geographical constraints.

Rules Impact How Places Perform—Socially, Environmentally and Economically by Talen (2011) describes in detail the effect of different kinds of regulations on built forms. However, it still does examine people's living practices and the book is an important reference material for this research, critiquing zoning laws and the fact that while early regulations were put in place for specific purposes, the situations that prompted the rules no longer exist—but the rules continue to dictate the way cities are being built. She raises an important debate by explaining in detail the effect of these rules on the current growth of cities. She concludes that rules as they exist in their current form can hinder the smarter growth of cities.

Development patterns today typically follow the cookie-cutter grid subdivision and highway strip patterns that have been popular with builders since the mid-1900s. A quick review of local land use regulations in many municipalities across the country will yield a similar result. This type of development pattern is encouraged or even required under these codes. Development that incorporates the principles of 'smart growth' is either prohibited outright or would require special permits, which lengthen the process, thereby creating disincentives for developers (Wilmer 2006).

A centuries old English common law— 'the doctrine of ancient lights'—prohibits a neighbour from blocking the light of an existing window. The earliest origins are unknown, but it may have been formalised during the growth of the English textile industry. The law evolved so that it applied to only certain cases. It applied to daylight, not to sunlight; it did not protect views, but it worked across streets; it restrained the construction of adjacent buildings that block the sky; it kept building heights down. It has been conjectured that it is one reason the scale of central London remained low, while New York soared (Davis 2000).

In contrast to the performance-based and locally applied ancient lights doctrine, modern zoning involves uniform application of explicit standards for which intentions may not be generally understood (Davis 2000). In current times, access to light is addressed by enforcing setback lines, height restrictions and sometimes minimum/maximum floor area ratios. These are codified and administered with no direct engagement or experience of the site. Compliance is checked on drawings, and a neighbour's agreement to deviate might still not allow for a variation from the rule (Davis 2000).

This kind of codified law might seem unnecessary in arid locations. Vernacular practices of India and the Middle East tend to build cluster housing with common walls, open courtyards, skylights, and large doorways. In Islamic districts, where social norms and protection of domestic privacy influenced the limited number of doors or windows facing the alleyway, this kind of law to give access to light through setback becomes less important. Moreover, excessive light might be unsuitable in specific climatic zones or even increase reliance on energy resources to cool dwellings and in turn increase the carbon footprint.

There have been instances where the American courts have denied the plea of access to light on the basis of the resident not breaking any building laws (Moskowitz 1976). With the escalation of the energy crisis and environmental laws promoting installation of solar panels on rooftops, legislators may have to address the need to guarantee access to light for solar collectors, in cases where access has not already been provided by building setback, height restriction, and minimum floor area ratios contained in existing zoning and building ordinances (Moskowitz 1976, Bradbrook 1989, Victoria State Government 2018, Clarke 2019).

These brief examples demonstrate that codes and regulations are and should be constantly assessed in the light of new knowledge. Importantly, they highlight how codes and regulations shape the built environment of the city and specifically residential areas.

2.1.5 Observable Trends and Concerns

Urban development policies and ways in which they are practised evolve as we learn from past mistakes and set new goals for the future. Sustainable urban development debates are complex and multidisciplinary. It is beyond the scope of this study to establish

authority over this extremely contested and multi-faceted field of research. This research attempts to understand sustainability within the socio-cultural context of urbanisation at the fringe and focus on the role of local community aspirations in driving the ways in which their regions become urbanised. To do so, it is useful to identify key trends in the discourse on urban development.

Cities have existed for 5000 years. Throughout history, cities were the meeting place for commerce, administrative, religious and ceremonial activities. The countryside supported these cities through agricultural activities. Industrialisation is changing this scenario. Cities are now places of large-scale economic activities, and many country towns are undergoing urbanisation. This research explores what happens to built-forms, lifestyles and socio-cultural values of these primarily rural communities while their environment undergoes a transformation whereby rural areas become urbanised.

Relevant theoretical literature produced by urban planners and architects in the 20th century tends to revolve around a series of movements that promoted significant shifts in thinking about the city and associated urban design priorities (Salesses, Schechtner and Hidalgo 2013). While the Garden City movement led by Ebenezer Howard (1902) was concerned with density and distribution, proposing a mixture of low-rise housing and parks, the City Beautiful or Civic Art movement (Kepes 1971; Cherry, Jordan, and Kafkoulas 1993; Hall and Ward 2014; Robinson, LeGates, and Stout 2021) prioritised the aesthetics of order and decorum in the design of streets and buildings. Arguably, the ideal of the Radiant City promoted a generation later by Le Corbusier (1967) imbibed the concerns of both of the competing paradigms that had preceded it, translating Howard's Garden City principles into the emerging prospect of higher density metropolitan landscapes where high-rise buildings would be the fundamental new unit of urban design and organisation. Tempering the potential excesses and reductivism of such hyper-rationalist visions of modern urbanism, however, the Organic City movement subsequently articulated by Lewis Mumford (1946), and later echoed by Kevin Lynch (1968, 1984) among others, described cities as entities that lived and died within the boundaries of space and time.

Particularly in Australia, 1860 to early 1900s saw unprecedented rates of urbanisation with two-thirds of the population living in cities and towns, while the USA reached that only by 1920 and Canada only in 1950 (Sandercock 1975). In the context of urban growth

within South Australia, a conference held in 1978 by CSIRO, explored the possibilities of setting up coastal urban settlement of half a million population far north of Adelaide – around the regions of Fowlers Bay, Ceduna, Port Augusta and Port Pirie. Analyses by various presenters urged for selection of new sites with careful considerations of climate, impact on food production areas, biodiversity, water economy and even recreational facilities (Hallsworth 1978). However, despite valuable suggestions by many scholars (Hallsworth 1978; Stretton 1976, 1989, 2005; Sandercock 1975, 1998; Gleeson 2006, 2018; Gleeson and Low 2000) Metropolitan Adelaide continued to grow along the edges, creating more suburbia at its rural-urban fringe (Calthorpe 2001; Bunker and Houston 2003; Buxton and Butt 2020;). In a rapidly urbanising state, in an effort to improve the socio-economic state of the country, Australia, as in many other countries globally, planning systems are being continuously reformed (Ruming and Goodman 2016). These planning reforms have a direct impact on local built character as well as on lifestyles of local communities.

Literature on cities by social scientists focuses mainly on ‘connection between demographic and economic variables’, sidelining the built environment itself (Salesses, Schechtner and Hidalgo 2013). Economists tend to focus on economic geographies (Fujita and Krugman 2003) or urbanisation that is triggered by knowledge sharing (Glaeser et al. 1992). Scholars have also called cities as complex spatial phenomenon of fractal cities (Batty 2005; Batty and Longley 1994), and connected people to various infrastructural variables to study mobility or social networks (Gonzalez, Hidalgo and Barabasi 2008; Montjoye et al. 2013; Bettencourt et al. 2007), but are singularly focussed and do not connect those studies with architectural or urban design features.

Regional planners, such as Benton MacKaye (1962), promote the concept of natural corridors between suburbs, creating channels of natural environment supporting outdoor public recreation, protecting indigenous lands and encouraging ecological balance. The concept argues that this leads to independent communities as opposed to suburban sprawl. This notion is further reiterated by ecological literature on cities, with concepts of designing with nature (McHarg 1992) and biophilic urbanism (Newman, Beatley and Boyer 2017; Beatley 2016; Xue et al. 2019), whereby the natural features of a region become the primary guiding element towards designing the built environment. Concepts of ecocities (Downton 2009), cities within living landscapes (Geddes 1949; Mumford

1946) also strongly emphasise the importance of involving natural features of the region in urban design and development practices.

The closest literature that explores socio-cultural relationships with the built environment is by Hugh Stretton (1976, 1978, 1989), Leonie Sandercock (1975, 1990, 1998), Brendan Gleeson (2000, 2006, 2018), (Jane Jacobs (1961, 1970, 1985, 2006), Jan Gehl (1980, 1986, 2010; Gehl and Svarre 2013b), Robert Sommer (1983) Kevin Lynch (1958, 1968, 1984) and Christopher Alexander (1975, 1977). Specific to Metropolitan Adelaide in Australia, Hugh Stretton's seminal works on addressing inequality and disadvantage through urban, economic and housing policy changes are significant (Spoehr 2015; Hamnett 2015). George Kelling's broken windows theory (Wilson and Kelling 1982; Bratton and Kelling 2006) also comes close to linking physical attributes of the built environment to socio-cultural factors including criminal studies. While Jacobs writes in both areas of built environment and social sciences, there is still no clear dialogue between the two streams of studies. Gehl, Sommer, Lynch and Alexander, all of whom passionately discuss the impact of architectural and urban features on social behaviour, provide a deep insight into the workings of urban forms and typologies. While they have very valuable lessons about the making of the urban materiality and architectural fabric, they do not quite address the issues of cultural landscapes interspersed with ecological concerns. Broken windows theory, on the other hand, provides a direct link between urban forms and social outcomes, although the theory limits itself to applications in criminal studies only, echoing the pioneering observations of Jacob Riis' study, *How the Other Half Lives* (1890). Much debated among criminology experts, broken windows theory suggests strong connections between urban disorder and social ills. The theory links broken windows of a car or building, litter, graffiti and such to other kinds of social disorders such as drugs, petty crimes and prostitution.

Inverting the broken windows theory, one could argue that an ordered urban environment with a strong sense of architectural/regional identity invokes a positive social order with a sense of belonging, wellbeing and healthy interactions among the communities inhabiting those environments. In this vein, the restorative power of wilderness spaces or urban landscapes championed by Frederick Law Olmsted Sr. has been deeply influential in the discipline of landscape architecture and urban design. Moreover, the importance of valuing ecology in the built environment disciplines has gained increasing attention

across the twentieth century. Increasingly, holistic approaches to urban design and regional planning are gaining ground. Bioregional urbanism that includes a regional planning approach to include ecological perspectives, an urban planning and infrastructure approach to meet the urban needs of new dwellers, and a social scientist's approach to ensure that the socio-cultural values of the existing communities are upheld, even as the rural hinterland undergoes urbanisation at metropolitan edges. This is one of the principles that the theory of bioregional urbanism is built on.

Advocates of bioregional urbanism maintain that people who 'belong' to a bioregion are heavily invested in the wellbeing of their land, their place and its future. They are aware of all the treasures of the land, its limits, places where its bounties can be developed, and places where it must not be stressed (Sale 2000; Brunckhorst 2000; T. Young 2000; Frampton 2007; Newman, Beatley and Boyer 2017). Hence, it is important to use that intangible local knowledge from local communities while preparing urban development policies and setting guidelines of practice. How else to capture that invaluable knowledge other than to engage with the local dwellers (T. Berman 2017) while planning the future of their land, especially when the region becomes incorporated into a metropolitan city limits to be urbanised with the danger of losing its local character?

2.2 Neighbourhood and Community Character

Architecture, design and planning determine how lively a city is. When physical structures and spaces make it easier and inviting for one to use a city space, social interactions are facilitated and the city becomes more lively.

(Gehl, *Cities for People*, 2010, p. 99)

The term 'character' in planning parlance has undergone many iterations. In the early 1980s, academic studies prioritised 'place' and debates on 'streetscape' conservation. In recent decades, this discourse invariably led to a major conundrum faced by the Australian metropolitan planning authorities. On the one hand, the concept of higher density development and compact city policies have proved to be the need of the hour, while on the other, the implementation of these policies led to stiff resistance by residents who are not happy with any change to 'neighbourhood character' (Dovey, Woodcock and Wood 2009a, 2009b).

Over the years, the meaning of ‘character’ in relation to urban studies has evolved. The term started appearing in planning literature around the 1990s. At the time, the term was prominent in the context of ‘heritage’. In the 1992 Australian model code for residential development, there was a section titled ‘Urban Character & Heritage’. It explained that ‘character’ is a host of factors, such as landform, landscape, streetscape, site layout, built form and heritage, that affect our perception and understanding of a place². However, by 1994, character was defined by the Victorian state government *as a function of the form and feel of the place* (Wood 2015).

In the case of Willunga Basin the South Australian state government drew the urban growth boundary line right through it to give equal attention to both densification and protection of existing character. Metropolitan planning goals to contain the outward expansion of a city by identifying a growth boundary, and by concentrating the development in ‘activity centres’ that are transit oriented. However, nestled within this are multiple land use zones with conflicting criteria and contesting priorities in which to assess new development projects. The dichotomy of these policies is made worse by the fact that the definition of ‘desired character’ for each of these zones is not clear.

In Victoria, and particularly in the Melbourne metropolitan area, in the early 1990s, urban regulation was seen as an impediment to market-led development. This led to an approach that called for more flexibility, facilitation, and performance, thus diluting the ‘regulations’ to mere guidelines. This deregulation led to stiff opposition by residents who saw this development as inappropriate, destroying the neighbourhood character (Dovey 2008; Dovey, Woodcock and Wood 2009a, 2009b). Because the definition for this term ‘character’ was loose, it was up to the local government to ‘assess’ the character of a place. They commissioned studies, and most of the metropolitan areas underwent character assessment. Even though these studies attempted to salve the agitated residents, and fill bureaucratic requirements to label and categorise neighbourhoods, they did not capture the details of the experience of residents. A major facet was ignored—how the

² Australian model code for residential development Ed. 1. prepared by the Model Code Task Force of the Joint Venture for More Affordable Housing. Canberra: Australian Govt. Pub. Service for the Dept. of Industry, Technology and Commerce, 1990 103 p <https://catalogue.nla.gov.au/Record/1108922>

experiences of residents are interlinked to the physical characteristics. It also turned out that if a local government area (LGA) felt that a development proposal would ruin the characteristics of the neighbourhood, then it could be appealed legally in the state's tribunal, known as the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT). The lawyers would then become arbitrators of 'character'.

In 2002, proposals were received by the inner-city council of Yarra that furthered the cause of using 'character' as a planning tool, and unravelling the various layers of its meanings and direct ways in which it could be used in urban politics. An innovative housing project was proposed for a former industrial site in Fitzroy, an inner suburb of Melbourne, Victoria. Architect Ivan Rijavec envisioned a mix of functions, building types and heights consistent with Fitzroy's prevailing industrial character—inventive, transgressive, multicultural and free form, something that he labelled as 'urban jazz'. This displeased local residents, triggering them to campaign against it, even going to the extent of calling it an 'urban joke'. This proposal was appealed in the VCAT, but was eventually approved when the proposal was backed by expert witnesses who vouched for the architectural quality of the proposal.

The Fitzroy study case is an amalgamation of different aspirations—the need of the residents to limit change; the desire of architects to materialise their vision of a city; the greed of developers wanting taller buildings for more profit; the demand in the market for a commanding view; and, to top it all, the pressure on state authorities for higher density development. The enthusiasm of the residents to test the idea of 'character' being at the centre of city planning was matched by the keenness of the developers to have site-by-site exceptions in urban regulations. This suggests that defining and legislating character is problematic, as it is with 'identity', 'place', 'home' and 'community'.

Spatiality and sociality are interlinked, the study of one leading to the other (Dovey, Woodcock and Wood 2009a; Massey 1993; Lefebvre 1991; Bourdieu 1977). Pierre Bourdieu explains the concept of habitus, which is a set of dispositions that structure everyday life (Power 1999). Habitus is described as not only a 'sense of one's place' but also a 'sense of other's place'. As we turn place identity into planning codes, we move from nostalgia to structured discourses on plan and character (Dovey, Woodcock and Wood 2009a).

While there have been some experiments with mixed-use zoning, most planning policies of today believe in and practise Euclidean zoning—single-use zoning. However, by concentrating on land use districts, neighbourhood character is lost (the authors actually use the term ‘muck up’!) (Kendig and Keast 2010).

Often, people living in big cities tend to reminisce about their childhood in small towns, or even about how the big city now was once an adorable and charming place. Kendig and Keast (2010) provide hope that ‘preserving small town character’ is not just loose talk, but can be defined and scientifically measured using community character tools. They introduced tools to describe the physical form of communities and the resulting lifestyle and opportunities. Upon studying this approach, it can be agreed that it indeed gives a systematic approach to convert the vague visions of citizens and governments into a logical plan - ‘Community character system’. Community character system is a design-oriented system for planning and zoning communities by identifying critical elements, structure and principles encompassing physical, socio-economic and environmental attributes that give ‘character’ to a community, and provides tools to measure these characters and recommends new guidelines to address limitations in the current systems of planning and design methods (Kendig and Keast 2010). Land use, density and zoning by themselves do not produce good design; nor are they linked to social, economic, environmental or lifestyle elements. Most importantly this new system considers how people of a community live, work and shop.

They (Kendig and Keast 2010) further define community character system as having four major elements: (a) scale, (b) state, (c) type and (d) form. ‘Scale’ includes shopping, employment and cultural opportunities available for the people. Increasing scale leads to changing work patterns, and thus increased traffic volumes and congestion. ‘State’ takes stock and makes people aware of the status quo of how their community functions, and how the decisions on zoning affect them. ‘Type’ involves three classes of character: urban, suburban and rural. ‘Form’ talks about compositional, group and mega strategy for design of settlements. In addition to the above, urban designers tend to include (e) natural and (f) visual characteristics (Pivo 1992) to define community character.

The community character system is a powerful tool that could inform urban development policies and practices. It incorporates architectural and environmental contexts, thus providing communities with a strong vision that can be extrapolated to zoning

regulations. It links the physical to the social, economic, cultural, environmental and other elements. It also acknowledges that different characters mean different lifestyle preferences, and that an individual's decision of the character type they choose to live in is a function not only of beauty and aesthetics but also of their social and economic constraints.

There are six primary reasons for defining community character: (1) to provide a rationale for zoning; (2) to gauge land use and density; (3) to explore and develop a design guidance for the less talked about types of character, apart from the three main urban types; (4) to overcome an architect-driven vision of planning because, of late, many architectural visions of an ideal urban community have failed; (5) to amalgamate social, economic, environmental, cultural and other physical elements with character so that planning is realistic; and (6) to enable measurement of character using the tools so that it is not just a conceptual theory, but something that can be converted to design and regulation (Kendig and Keast 2010).

Le Corbusier proposed a design of stark medium- and high-rise buildings, while Frank Lloyd Wright promoted low-density communities that were largely dependent on automobiles. Paolo Soleri, on the other hand, had a very eccentric and extreme view where the entire city must be planned like a single building. In reality, this can never materialise, especially on a large scale, while it might be said that it has good potential on a small scale. Another new popular concept is called the Transect, promoted by New Urbanists as a universal template, seeking to return to well-designed urban spaces by the use of SmartCode³ (Duany and Talen 2002). However, the models they extol could be considered just as rigid as the zoning regulations that they seek to do away with. Architect-driven approaches, which tend to fit people into the architect's vision, may be good for individual projects – in which residents are attracted to such a vision and/or its aesthetic, and choose to conform to it – but not necessarily for larger-scale community planning.

No doubt, thoughtful planning and improved sensitivity to community character will improve not only the environmental quality but also the quality of life (Kendig 2010). It is well established that citizens all around the world are concerned about how a new

³ SmartCode is discussed in more detail in Chapter Four, Section 4.6

proposed land use may destroy the ‘character’ of their neighbourhood. This only means that planners must not only understand the character of a neighbourhood but also work towards protecting it. However, even though there may be a vision to protect small town character, there may be a parallel proposal that may end up doubling the population, which then irreversibly changes the community that it was intending to protect. Thus, there is a need for citizens and planners to have a common character-based language and planning methodology.

To understand a community’s character, three aspects need to be considered: its size and scale, physical relation to other communities, and socio-cultural characteristics.

In 1992 in Victoria, with the liberal political regime, urban regulations were seen as a hindrance to market-led developments (Dovey, Woodcock and Wood 2009a), local government planning was deregulated, and all planning controls became ‘guidelines’. This led to huge opposition from local residents who regarded new developments as ‘inappropriate’, ‘out of character’ and in violation of ‘neighbourhood character’.

Local communities objecting and taking to ‘activism’ is one of the key characteristics of a ‘conscious community’, particularly when their vision for their region (bioregion) does not align with that of the governing agencies, planners or private developers. This research investigates the extent and modes of engagement, and analyses its impact on planning regulations, development controls and outcomes on local character at the fringe of metropolitan Adelaide, where the urban–rural conflicts around urbanisation come to a head.

2.3 Spatial Settings for Social Connections

The way we build and organise our cities can help or hinder social connection.

(Kelly et al., *Social Cities*, 2012, p. 3)

The Grattan report (Kelly et al. 2012) remarks how even though we have made enormous progress in thinking about how to make cities more productive and sustainable, we still lag behind in our understanding of what makes a city social—a city that helps to connect us with other people. As humans are social animals, lack of social connections and relationships lead to loneliness and isolation. Data show that people’s friendships and neighbourhood connections have diminished over the past two decades. The report

reiterates that the way we build and organise our cities can help or hinder these social connections. For example, inefficient urban transport wastes our time in commuting, leaving less time for family and friends. On the other hand, availability of neighbourhood training grounds and local parks fosters people coming together and meeting. Design of streets and buildings, as discussed earlier, also plays a major role. We tend to hurry past a building that presents a blank wall to the street, while an open facade can create inviting spaces to stop and talk.

In the 1950s, city planning used to be from above and from outside. Priorities were typically ordered as follows: first the large outlines of the city, then the buildings, and last the spaces between them. However, experience from decades of city planning shows that this method does not invite people to use the city space efficiently, thus being counterproductive. Gehl (2010) predicts that city life will never stand a chance if the human dimension is not addressed. The widespread practice of planning from above and outside must be replaced with new planning procedures from below and inside, following the principle of first life, then space, then buildings.

Despite the fact that cities are often represented as sites of loneliness and alienation, cities are places where large numbers of people come together to benefit from interacting with each other. Urban transport allows people to move around to see family and friends. Cities provide places for us to meet, such as cafes, libraries, parks and footpaths. A city that ‘builds in’ isolation through its housing options, transport accessibility and other features can have significant consequences for the strength of people’s relationships and for physical and mental health. Conversely, the best designed spaces do not guarantee connection. Overt attempts to engineer social interaction can backfire as people often withdraw when they feel their privacy is under threat. Thus, the right balance needs to be achieved (Gehl 2010, 1980; Peris-Ortiz, Bennett and Pérez-Bustamante Yábar 2017; Jacobs 1961).

Cities help set the signals for engagement and interaction. What is more, a lively city might prove better at reducing crime and anti-social behaviour than physical security measures such as shutters or CCTV cameras (Kelly 2015; Gehl 2010, 1980; C. Alexander 1977; Jacobs 1961). ‘Sense of belonging’ in our communities is as important as family relations. Incidental interactions on the street are as important as close contact with loved

ones. Knowing neighbours, feeling safe on the streets and living in an area with distinctive character can help to create this sense of belonging.

On a hot summer day in July 1995, a heat wave hit Chicago, leading to high consumption of electricity and power failures for up to two days. About 700 people died, 20 times more than the disaster of Hurricane Andrew in 1992. Subsequent studies showed that fewer people died in neighbourhoods where people knew and trusted their neighbours than in nearby areas with weak social connections (Klinenberg 2002). This indelible link of social connection to health and wellbeing means that for many people, improved relationships are a much more realistic path to a better life than increased income (Cummins et al. 2011). Thus, it is no surprise that presidents and prime ministers of leading countries feel the need to devise new ways of measuring wellbeing and find more relevant indicators of social progress, other than GDP (Stiglitz 2009).

The importance of shared experiences of people in a neighbourhood have long been stressed by sociologists such as Steel (1973), who recognise that one of the basic human needs is to feel a sense of belonging and emotional attachment. This shared symbolic identification is what distinguishes a community from a mere group of people (McMillan and Chavis 1986). Oldenburg (1981) and Hester (1999) suggest through their studies that associations with people, places and events contribute to a sense of familiarity and belonging to the community.

A neighbourhood is more than just the area surrounding our home. A lot of social contact takes place in local areas, and spending time with others in the neighbourhood helps the feeling of belonging. Public spaces in neighbourhoods, such as parks, libraries and community centres, are important for social connection. A study in the Netherlands found that people with more green spaces in their neighbourhood feel less lonely (Kelly et al. 2012). The layout of a neighbourhood also helps one feel oriented and gives a sense of territory and belonging. Physical evidence of 'edges' that mark the boundary of a neighbourhood can contribute to a sense of common identity while still being welcoming to visitors. These boundaries can be natural features such as a river or a hill, or incorporate symbols such as gateways or signs. However, research on neighbourhood structure suggests no clear answer as to what type of layout works best. Some studies report that grids produce increased contact and a greater sense of community (Cozens and Hillier

2008), while other studies suggest that cul-de-sacs promote more familiarity between neighbours (Sanoff and Dickerson 1971; Smith 1973; Appleyard 1981).

Many places around the world offer interesting examples of the design and use of edge zones in residential areas: the front gardens of English semi-detached houses, Dutch stoops, traditional Japanese city houses, the North American porch, steps and landings leading up to Brooklyn's brownstones in New York City, and the front yards of low-rise row houses in Australian cities (Gehl 2010; Gehl and Svarre 2013b; Gehl et al. 1977). All are examples of the design of semi-private zones in older residential neighbourhoods. However, in the new world, especially in Australia, many new residential areas have allowed parking places and garages to usurp edge zones, or they have done away with all ground-floor articulation such that houses rise up from lawns and sidewalks like cliffs from the sea. People who live in this type of housing move directly from the private to the public sphere with no transition or variation.

Streets are more than a means to reach home; they are places where children first learn about the world, where neighbours meet, and that provide opportunities for connecting with the immediate community. 'People have always lived on streets' (Appleyard 1981). Buildings with varied facades at street level contribute to variety through nooks, alcoves and ledges that provide visual interest and places for people to stand, children to play and buskers to perform. In residential streets, ideal design not only creates easy opportunities for neighbours to interact with each other but also enables them to choose when and where they will interact. We place a high premium on privacy and the ability to withdraw behind our own front door so as to avoid a neighbour we dislike or find tedious. Further, a heavily trafficked street has little or no activity on the sidewalk, while on streets with light traffic, front steps are frequently used for sitting and chatting, and play and casual conversation can take place on the pavement.

Streets make a great impact on how people perceive a city. Gehl (1986) categorises streets into those having a 'hard edge' and those with a 'soft edge'. A soft edge is a transition between the inside and the outside. A street with a soft edge has shops lined up, transparent facades, large windows, goods on display, and much to see or touch, encouraging people to slow down and even stop. Narrow units, many doors and vertical relief in the facades help intensify the walking experience. A hard edge, on the other hand, is closed, and pedestrians walk past long sections of facades of black glass, concrete or

masonry. There are few or no doors, and little to experience or no reason to walk that street, and ‘if Edge Fails, then the space never becomes lively’ (Alexander 1977).

While streets and their edges are important, so are the interfaces between private and public properties (Gehl et al. 1977). Similar to street edges, these transition spaces are categorised as ‘soft interface’ and ‘hard interface’. A soft interface is when the border line between private and public space is softened. Front yards with low picket fences, which provide the occupants with the possibility to stay on private territory, yet on the public side of the house, are a good example. The occupants are able to see what is going on, be informed and entertained by the street life, and engage in various social encounters, all in a very relaxed way. A hard interface is where no defined home territory is provided in front of the door so that when one steps outside, there is hardly anything to do, nowhere to sit, and nothing to attend to. Thus, the inhabitants will tend to spend little time on the public side of the house, resulting in an emptier and more deserted street. The chances of meeting other people will thus be limited. The houses, as well as the street, tend to look a little more forbidding and uninviting.

Streets epitomise public space as they constitute a major part of the city. From times immemorial, streets have been regarded as spaces necessary for not only serving basic needs of survival, communication and entertainment, but also to perform political, commercial, civic, social and even religious functions (Rudofsky 1969; Lofland 1973). In recent times, in developed societies, many of these functions have moved to private and virtual realms, or away from the streets, into different types of public spaces. Studies also show that streets that cater to our needs are positively associated with growth in terms of economy, health of people and even building a sense of community. Mehta (2006) explores the interrelationships between behaviour patterns of people and the physical features of the street, also relating to its sociability.

Contemporary definitions of ‘liveliness’ denote a sense of being full of life and energy, animated, exciting, full of activity, stimulating, bright and colourful, bouncy, springy, to name just a few (*Webster’s Dictionary* 1996). However, a street may be said to be lively because of two opposite reasons—dynamic or static, or even a combination of both. When a number of people are walking through it, a street can be called ‘dynamic’, while the appearance of liveliness is rendered by people engaged in static activities—seated, lingering or standing—as well (Mehta 2006; Gehl 1980).

A lively street is a space that is designed specifically for a wide variety of purposes that include both foreseen and unforeseen uses, not just positioned within physical dimensions but also creating a social dimension. It must be used by citizens for taking part in various activities with which they are already familiar, and it must offer opportunities and encourage people to take an interest in and do new things. These are the qualities that Jacobs (1961) appreciated in Greenwich Village streets and sidewalks, and these are what Walzer (1986) described as open-minded spaces, where we tend to spend more time to loiter, and this in turn adds to the liveliness of a street.

Studies show that people prefer settings with soft edges, where there are stores and community hangouts, which act as destinations to meet friends and other people and engage in activities (Mehta 2006; Gehl 1980). Settings where there are a variety of stores, especially those that offer daily shopping needs, are preferred as this renders a distinctive character and ambience to the place. Pedestrian-friendly public spaces with ample sidewalks and seating, shade shelter and street furniture further enhance the charm of a place. The facade of a building can also add alcoves and small spaces for a quick chat, increasing the liveliness of a street. This leaves one without doubt that lively streets are a much-desired aspect of any city (Jacobs 1961; Lynch 1984; Gehl 1980, 1986; Whyte 2009; Carmona et al. 2003). ‘There is no doubt about the influence of architecture and structure upon human character and action. We make our buildings and afterwards, they make us. They regulate the course of our lives’ (Winston Churchill 1924, quoted in Kelly et al. 2012).

Zoning laws and planning rules can have a dramatic impact on the interface between building and street. For example, in 1957, Chicago imposed a cap on the floor area ratio of office buildings. Developers received a bonus on FAR (they could add height) if they provided sidewalk arcades and setbacks from the street. This system resulted in some civic space, amenable to pedestrian movement, but it also produced barren concrete plazas that were designed primarily to meet the criteria for the bonus, without much consideration of how they would be used. Steve Jobs used building design to promote interaction and collaboration when he ran Pixar, an animation company. He believed the best meetings happen by chance, so he arranged the office around a central atrium to bring people from different areas together. In residential areas, soft interfaces, as discussed previously, are of utmost importance to act as buffers between residential and public

spaces. These semi-private areas, such as front yards, porches and steps, act as areas where residents and passers-by are allowed to be, and help people connect with each other and promote passive surveillance, deterring crime and increasing feelings of safety, security and community (Kelly et al. 2012).

There are a few city design movements in recent times to improve the quality of urban life, such as Productive City Movement which focusses on economic factors; Green City Movement which is focussed on improving natural environment in and around the city in order to improve biodiversity and bring nature closer and within the city limits; and Social City Movement which focusses on improving the socio-cultural aspects of the urban lifestyle. However, Productive City and Green City win more interest in policymaking, unlike the Social City (Kelly et al. 2012). Social connection—meaningful positive interaction—occurs at different levels, all of which are important, from the close, regular contact with loved ones to incidental interactions on the street. Improving social connection is not necessarily hard or costly; many examples are cited, showing how individuals and small groups make real differences without massive investments in public money.

2.4 Urban Sprawl and Zoning Laws

The terms ‘suburb’ and ‘sprawl’ are frequently interchanged, with the distinction not being clear. However, suburbs could be seen as well planned development outside the cities, while sprawl is usually considered bad development. Suburb is merely ‘the growth of the population outside the central city’(McKenzie 1996), whereas sprawl is a ‘specific form of suburbanisation that involves extremely low density settlement at far edges of the city’ (Silbaugh 2010). Sprawl can also be defined as ‘low density development on edges of cities that is poorly planned, consumes land, is automobile dependent and disregards its surroundings’ (Young 1995; Stretton 1988; Wilmer 2006).

As more and more people move into cities in search of work and opportunities, population increases and there is more demand on land. Current trends of the urban sprawl, where residential development is placed progressively further outside the city, are a matter of concern. These suburban sprawls are designed to separate housing from other government and commercial land uses. This low-density land use, compounded by the fact that the size of houses has increased post World War II, means that suburbs consume land at a

higher rate than population growth. Some studies show that land consumption has been increasing around cities at five times the rate of population growth (Richmond 2001, Buxton and Butt 2020).

Many negative consequences of city life can be attributed to urban sprawl. Most notably, it increases commute time. As there is no mixed land use, unlike in old city neighbourhoods, a person cannot easily cycle or walk to work. This increased commute time is known to sacrifice family and social time, which is most valuable to communities (Silbaugh 2010). Driving time is also increased for those servicing these new houses, such as food and utility delivery, cleaning services, post and safety patrolling. Thus, it can be concluded that sprawls are not environmentally friendly. They consume land and increase automobile use by residents and service providers (Gillham 2002; Goldman 2013; Halleux, Marcinczak and van der Krabben 2012).

There are other social impacts. Unlike people living in densely packed neighbourhoods, residents may experience isolation, and the urban sprawl does not favour single people, old people or those with physical disabilities, thus filtering out diversity (Hayden 1984; Gillham 2002). Studies also associate sprawls with divisive practices such as ‘white avoidance’, where white families move out of cities so that their children do not have to attend racially integrated schools, which are common in old neighbourhoods (Briggs and Wilson 2005). It is ironical that the costs of utility extension and public amenities such as road construction are borne by the government, and neither by the developers, who benefit economically, nor by the house owners (Burchell et al. 2005).

Maybe owing to our hunter-gatherer instincts, the wilderness and agrarian paradise outside city limits have always beckoned to the senses of a city dweller. There is tangible aspiration to live in a time when our settlement must be surrounded by open space, at least for its aesthetic value. Concepts such as Euclidean zoning and market forces tending to these aspirations mean that land is being consumed at an alarming rate, putting a strain on finite resources. Julian Goldman (2013), in his thesis, urges one to stop this trend from spreading any further to the open spaces of land that still exist. He opines that gentle intervention is needed to change the character and function of existing sprawls, rather than drastic measures such as demolishing existing structures. Goldman points out that we have reached a tipping point, and spreading out is no longer viable. Without a conscious effort to mitigate this trend, sprawl will extend into the remaining expanses of

rural land. It must not be forgotten that the developer initially invests their resources for initial construction costs of public amenities, only to obtain approval. However, when the project is finished, the responsibility of maintenance solely rests with the municipality. Low-density housing means inefficient use of these amenities. While zoning serves the purpose of protecting land value and controlling growth in an existing population, in the suburbs, zoning is established before development takes place. This reversal in trend leads to protection of single-family home developments from other land uses. Euclidean zoning ensures strict land use segregation. Thus, our neighbourhoods do not contain mixed land use, primarily because it is not allowed (Young 1995). Further to that, there is a 'classic policy deficit' with a lack of long-term visions and urban development policies specific to fringe regions (Buxton and Butt 2020).

Scholars (Duany and Talen 2002a, Buxton and Butt 2020) trace the incidence of sprawls to policies such as inexpensive housing loans (VAT & HA loans) available after World War II. For the first time in history, housing was built in single land use patterns. When the sprawls and suburbs developed, in natural sequence, retailers grouped together into shopping centres closer to these settlements. The offices followed suit, to form office parks. Thus, three separate land use patterns were established, connected by arterial roads and coinciding with increasing private car ownership. It is interesting to note that this is a case of history repeating itself, as this pattern is similar to the early settlements in America, up until the 1940s. However, the difference lies in the fact that earlier, these facets were planned simultaneously to form a single village/neighbourhood, whereas currently, the development is not planned, and is merely a result of sequential permits obtained by different developers, and thus does not add up to forming a town or a city. When all these activities are separated from each other, the only way to move is by private car, making it cumbersome, curbing freedom of movement of children and dependents, multiplying automobile ownership per family, leading to excessive use of cars on the roads, and depleting the family's economic assets.

On the other hand, in most industrialised countries, inner cities find it difficult to attract and retain middle class residents, unless more attractive urban environments and more meaningful incentives are made, (Hoek-Smit, Linneman, and Megbolugbe 1996). One of the supporting arguments of the suburban dwellers is that it is less expensive than urban housing for those who cannot afford a house in the middle of an old city. While opposition

to sprawl is seen as an elitist ideology, Cliff Moughtin (Moughtin and Signoretta 2009) debunks the theory of the compact city as the only environmentally sustainable form of a city, by quoting Brussels and Copenhagen, who propose that compact cities have a larger carbon footprint (density vs per capita use of petrol) and that population density decreases capacity to recycle organic waste and produce home-grown food. In addition, those opposing the sprawls tend to choose to live in the same sprawls than other forms of housing (Peter Linneman, quoted in Gillham 2002). Further, sprawls and suburbs may decongest a city, creating friendly neighbourhoods and community character. While it can be acknowledged that suburban living has its advantages and disadvantages, this research is more concerned with the phenomenon of urbanising the fringe itself, where rural townships transform into suburbia, and the complexities produced during this transformation. Possible outcomes are loss of identities, lifestyle changes and gentrification, which pushes out the local communities and other banes of increased population. This research explores the least studied but an important aspect of the urbanisation at the fringe phenomenon—loss of local identities—and what provisions exist in development plans to mitigate it and how local communities cope with it.

2.5 Development Plans and Regulations

Within the last half century, 30 million buildings have degraded cities and destroyed landscapes in exchange for 2000 architectural master pieces. This ratio is unacceptable and planners have now discovered that codes are the most powerful tools available to affect reform.

(Andres Duany in the foreword for *City Rules* (Talen 2011, p. xi))

Regulating how we plan and build our living environment has probably prevailed since the time humankind learnt to settle on open lands, from choosing the best place to construct shelter, away from nature's harm, protected from the wind, sun and rain, with access to food and water, to creating spaces for socialising, learning and recreation—claiming, planning, regulating and developing an area for the sake of human consumption. There are many fine examples of well laid out cities with fixed plans from the pre-classical and classical eras, such as Mesopotamia, the Indus Valley and Egypt.

Urban and regional planning as we now know it is a more recent phenomenon, a result of the aftermath of the industrial revolution, which left many cities crowded, poor and

unhealthy. Public health was the primary concern, and zoning different parts of the city for different functions/activities became a popular methodology; 1848 saw the first Public Health Act that laid out a framework of local authority in England and Wales, leading to the Local Government Act of 1858 regulating the structure of buildings through by-laws. The first official planning Act was that of the Housing and Town Planning Act in 1909, which echoes Ebenezer Howard's Garden City principles and strict building standards.

Legislation is an important instrument of government in organising society and protecting its citizens. Policies are framed to meet relevant legislative Acts and Bills, and Regulations are statutory instruments that are written to ensure that the intentions of the policies are carried out properly. The first known building regulation was the one in London (1189–1216) set up to control the thickness of party walls (common walls between buildings), badly sited privies and gutters.

In the state of South Australia, Australia, development (planning and building) regulations are formulated after a Bill has been passed into an Act. Figure 2.1 explains the process of how legislative rules and regulations are framed and become binding for systems, businesses and communities to abide by.

2.5.1 How Legislative Rules and Regulations are Formed

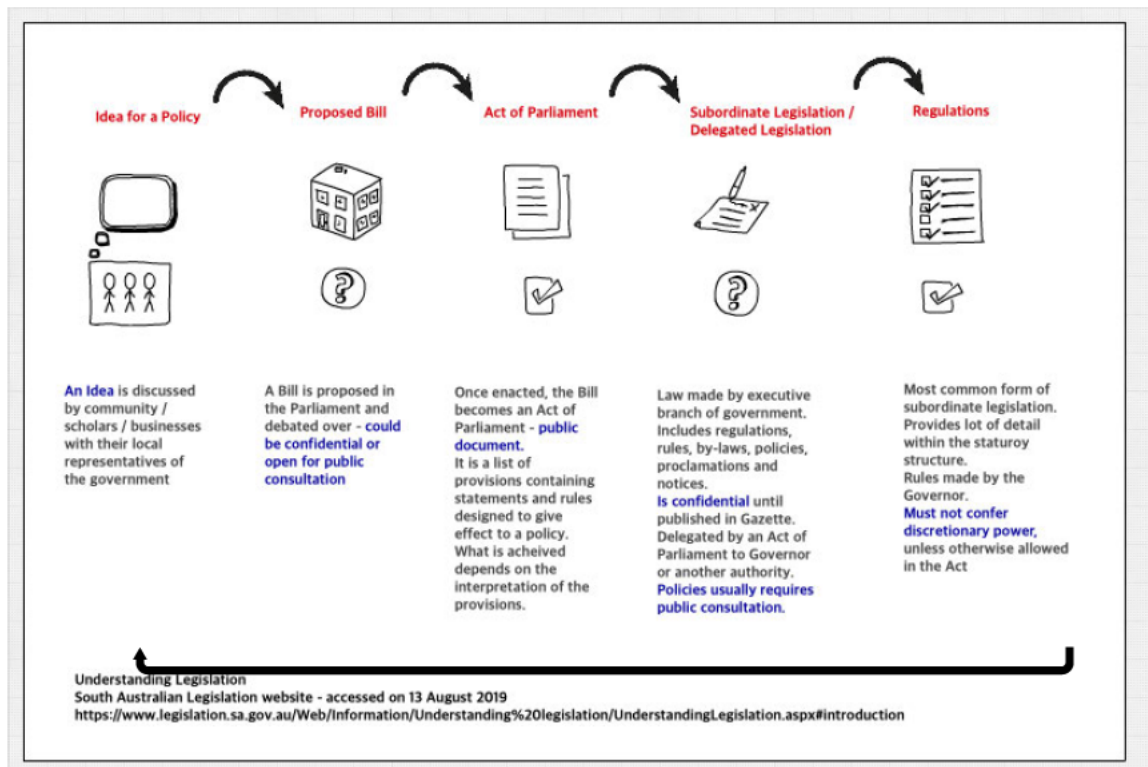


Figure 2.1: Understanding legislation

Idea for a policy: The need for a change or an improvement in a given place or an environment calls for a course of action to be adopted by the community people/scholars/business owners. This leads to the matter being discussed with the local government representative, to set the ground for an idea to be brought into motion. This is done to frame a new policy proposal.

Bills: The parliament is approached with the said proposal in the form of a Bill. The House of Parliament that created the Bill in question passes it to the other House for deliberation. It goes through multiple stages of reading and scrutiny in both Houses of Parliament. The Bill is debated over and can lapse if no middle ground is achieved between both the Houses. Once accepted by the Houses, it becomes a new Act after the approval of the Governor. The Bill remains a strictly confidential document until it is initiated into the parliament. In some instances, the minister or a member responsible for the Bill may involve the public for consultation before it is sent to the parliament.

Acts: Once the Bill is sanctioned by parliament and approved by the governor, it becomes an Act of the parliament, a public document and no longer confidential. This document

enlists detailed statements and rules that are required for a policy to be brought to fruition. Whatever is accomplished by the Act is a consequence of the analysis and understanding of these details. An Act usually consists of all the specifications needed for the execution of a particular policy.

Subordinate legislation: In the next stage, the Act is often supported by a subordinate legislation or the delegated legislation to be functional. These assisting laws are made by the executive government branch, authorised by the parliament, and include Regulations, rules, by-laws, policies, proclamations and notices. They remain confidential until they are issued by the *Government Gazette*. An Act of parliament entrusts the governor or another authority to make these laws. Throughout this process, the governor is guided by the executive council. Certain policies at this stage may require public consultation. The minister responsible for the said subordinate legislation may communicate with the public for further discussions on the matter.

Regulations: Post this is the legislation. Acts of parliament and subordinate legislation made under Acts of parliament form the legislation. The Regulations are the most prevalent form of subordinate legislation and provide a lot of detail within the statutory design of the statute. They must be constantly aligned with the purpose of the principal Act. If their purpose is uncertain, they can even be contested in a court of law. The detailed rules and Regulations under the statute diminish any chances of flexibility that may arise in the passage of a Bill into an Act through the parliament. The Regulations must not bestow any kind of unrestricted authority until and unless the principal Act sanctions this kind of delegation.

2.5.2 Planning Consent and Development Approval

As part of the development application approval process, particularly in City of Adelaide, before the recent PID act was introduced, all merit track (the other type is impact track) applications were publicly notified. If the application required minor notification, letters were sent to adjoining neighbours advising them of the application. If the proposal

required major notification, along with the letters, a signage would be placed on the site. Notifications were carried out by Planning and Land Authority.⁴

2.5.3 Politics of Boundaries and Local Character

The boundaries of the ‘character’ area are key to its definition and to its use in the politics of urban development (Dovey, Woodcock and Wood 2009a). Boundaries drawn on a map allow for control over a region by the governing bodies, and urban development patterns within it are guided by the legislated guidelines and by market agencies.

As seen in the case of Fitzroy, as studied by Kim Dovey et al., residents place value on social character within a highly localised boundary (street or block), while the architect/builder places emphasis on formal character (building height, diversity, etc.) across a larger area (100 ha). ‘While residents’ value change, they experience character in relatively static terms evolving only through small creative additions, the architect’s conception of urban character is more dynamic and always in process of creation’ (Dovey, Woodcock and Wood 2009a).

The local character of a region is a product of planning and development controls and shifting boundaries over a significant period of time, often driven by population growth, economic goals and more recently sustainability objectives (Manning et al. 2018; Ryan 2006; Zabik and Prytherch 2013; Tilt, Kearney and Bradley 2007). At the rural–urban fringe areas of metropolitan cities, the politics of boundaries and characters are more evident. Urbanisation of the fringe takes place to accommodate the growing population, but threatens important food production lands and rural lifestyles of existing rural townships. Add to that the complexities of identifying what invokes a ‘sense of place’ and ‘local character’, and understanding rural character can be a challenge, where social constructs along with physical setting in the context of surrounding green fields play a key role in describing rural life and rural character. However, for urban planning purposes, defining rural character should be based on local residents’ opinions, especially for developing planning guidelines (Ryan 2006, 2002).

⁴ Details of these processes in South Australia may be found on the following pages:
<https://www.sa.gov.au/topics/planning-and-property/land-and-property-development/building-and-property-development-applications/assessment>;
https://www.saplanningportal.sa.gov.au/current_planning_system/development_assessment;
<https://lawhandbook.sa.gov.au/print/ch28s02.php>; <https://www.planning.org.au/documents/item/2118>.

Manning (2018) uses five elements to identify character areas/types in London: street patterns, structure, block dimensions, public realms and densities. In a region with a high incidence of heritage listed buildings, which are protected by legislation, these buildings have a significant influence on local character (Manning et al. 2018). Other natural factors such as land contours, vegetation, geology, water bodies and location, along with people's attitudes, can also lend to the sense of place and local character. Tilt et al. (2007) state that rural character is 'difficult to define, yet you know it when you see it'. Thus boundaries, natural and political, along with legislative controls can influence how a region experiences development, thereby creating a unique sense of place and local character.

2.5.4 Urban Growth, Planning Paradigms and Character Preservation in Adelaide, Australia.

This section briefly describes the trend of urbanisation in Adelaide, Australia. Adelaide, the urban metropolitan capital of South Australia, has grown and expanded its legislative boundaries outwards from 270 sqkm (hundred of Adelaide as shown in figure 2.2) in the early 1900s to 3260 sq km (greater metropolitan area of Adelaide) in 2017 (as shown in figure 2.4). However, since the 1960s, even though the legislative metropolitan boundary has expanded to include the primarily rural, food-growing regions around Adelaide, some regions have been earmarked for urban growth and others for food production (as shown in figure 2.3). This initial visionary thinking pioneered by Stuart Hart, Town Planner in the 1960s, later strengthened by Hugh Stretton and Alan Hutchings in the 1990s, continues to this day, with much of the edges of the Greater Adelaide region being recognised as rural/regional and protected from urban growth through a complex system of planning policies, preservation Acts and development restrictions. While some of the communities living at the contested edge of the rural-urban fringe challenge the notion of adhering to the urban boundaries drawn half a century ago, this research queries the value systems of the 1960's against the demands of current population growth trends and urbanisation required to meet the demands of rising population numbers.

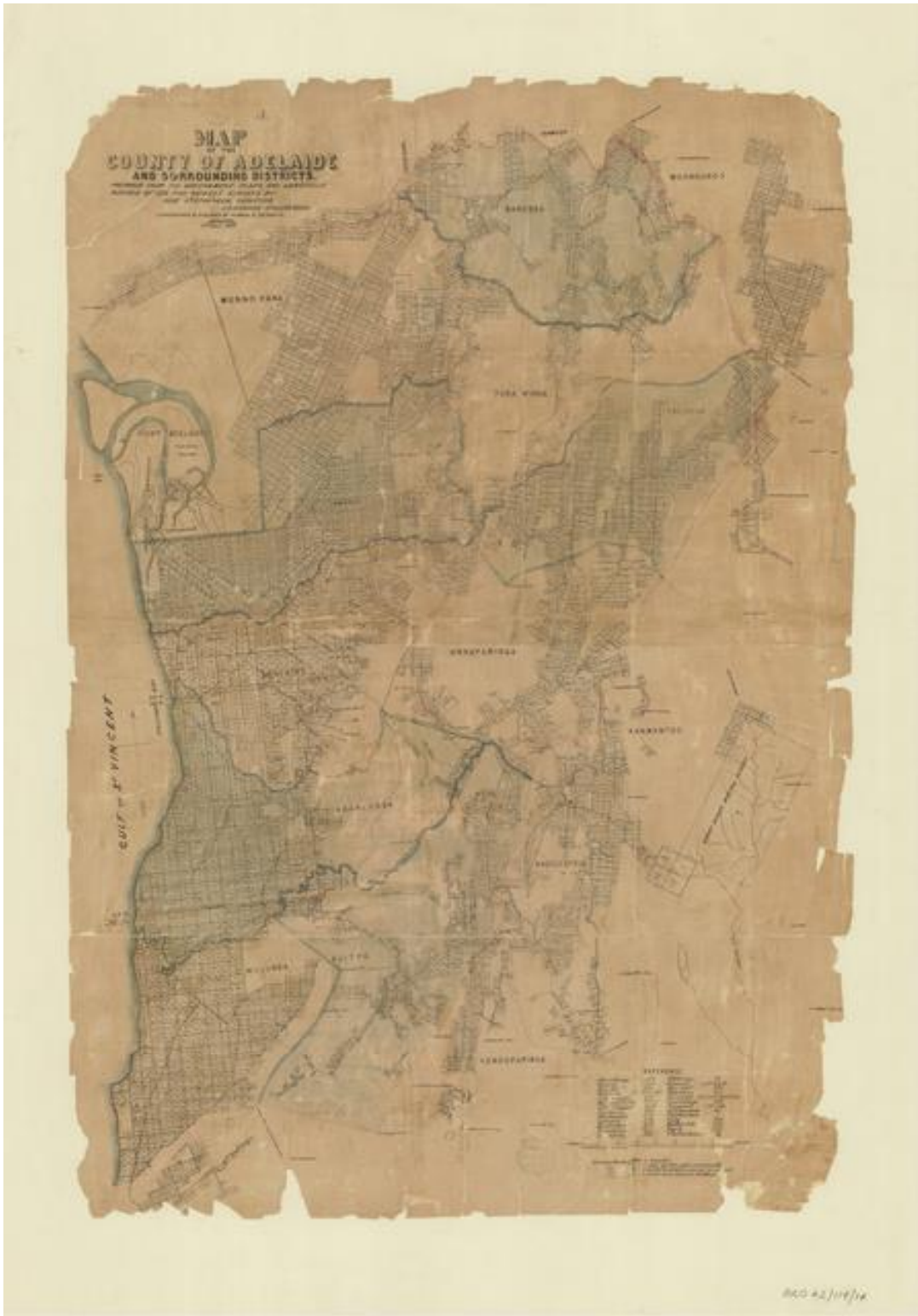


Figure 2.2: Map of County of Adelaide and surrounding districts – 1850
(Source: <https://collections.slsa.sa.gov.au/resource/BRG+42/119/14>)

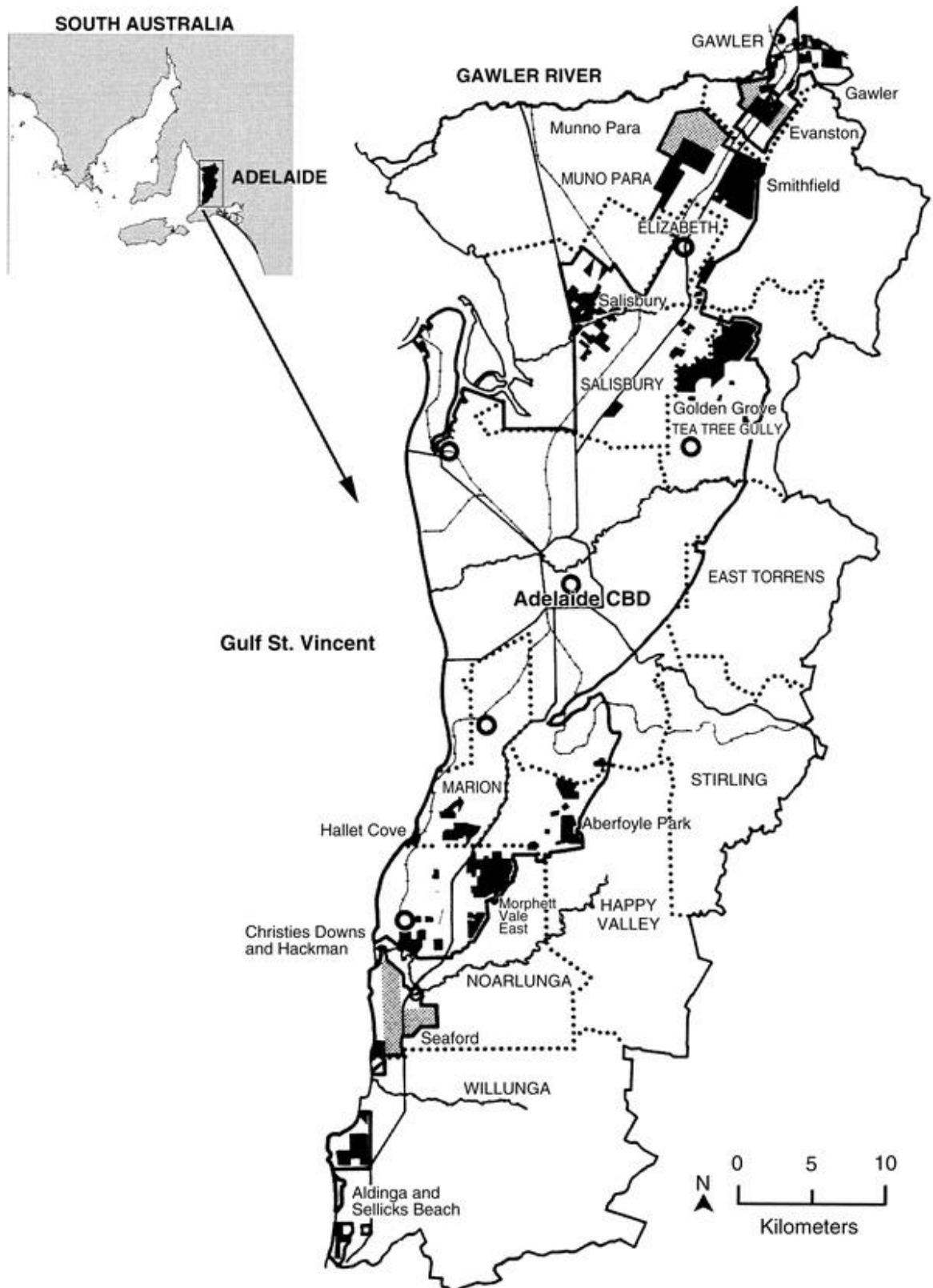


Figure 2.3: Map of the Adelaide metropolitan area 1962

(Source: South Australian State Planning Authority 1975, https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Map-of-the-Adelaide-metropolitan-area-Australia-South-Australian-State-Planning_fig4_252110788)

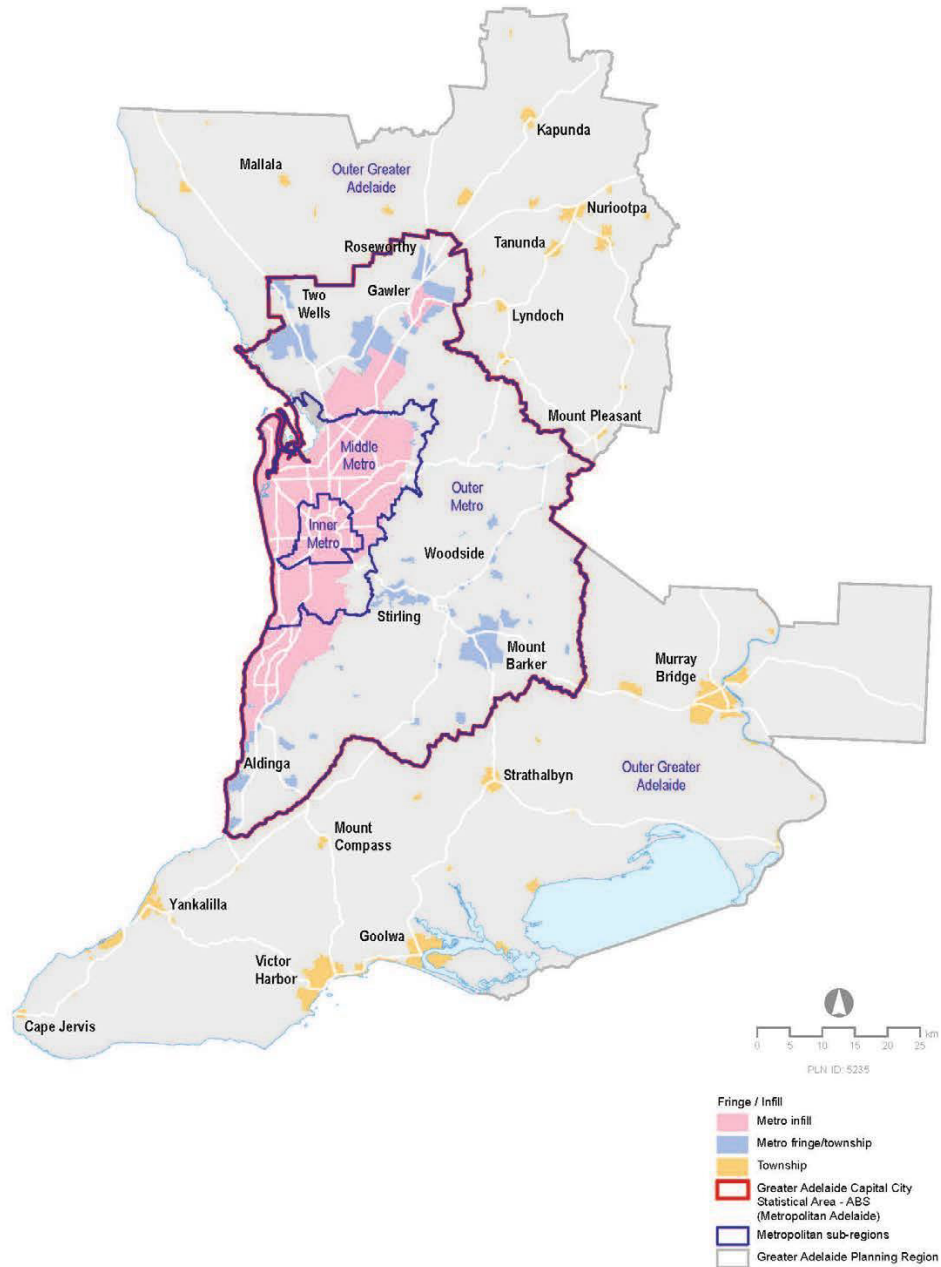


Figure 2.4: Greater Adelaide 2017

(Source: https://livingadelaide.sa.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/278260/Part-3.pdf)

Thus, in a constantly urbanising world, while there are rich discussions around the importance of including socio-cultural values in urban development plans, there is a gap between the theory of planning and actual practice of urban development policies. While the authorities draw up boundaries to limit urban growth and protect food growing regions, the conflict of urbanisation at these boundary edges cannot be ignored. The importance of meaningful dialogues with local communities to mitigate such conflicts is investigated in the next chapter: participatory approaches for urban development.

Chapter 3: Participatory Approaches for Urban Development

When energy and enthusiasm of local people is given the chance to flourish, remarkable results can be achieved even in the most deprived communities.

(Department of Environment, *An Evaluation of the Government's Inner City Task Force Initiative* (Report prepared by PA Cambridge Economic Consultants, London), 1992)

Public participation is an essential component of democratic governance. It is a process of cooperative inclusion of public views in political decision-making. Conventional approaches to urban planning/development have primarily depended on governments' technical skills and inputs from professional bodies. However, in recent times, states have recognised the importance of consulting stakeholders in their development plans. Public participation 'is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process' (Planning Institute Australia [PIA] n.d.; IAP2 n.d.).

Urban planning and development in the past has been about visualising and developing plans in isolation, with little or no public involvement—'planning for the public'. However, lately, the urban planning paradigm is changing in Western democracies and moving towards involving participation of all stakeholders in the planning process—'planning with the public' (Mahmoud and Arima 2011), and planning is seen as 'managing our co-existence in shared space' (Healey 1997).

Including the public in political decision-making processes has existed from the beginning of direct democracy, since the times of the ancient Greeks and Romans. However, the value of public participation itself has much debate. Some consider it as 'enhancing democracy' (Stretton 1996; Healey 1997; Sandercock 2010), while others think of it as 'undermining representative government'; some call it wasted money, while others find that it 'improves efficiency' (Pedersen and Johannsen 2016). In reality, from the 1960s onwards, public participation processes were used mainly for legitimising political decisions, with little intent to actually engage with the community. However, in the 1990s, urban policies programs, such as 'City Challenge', were undertaken to involve local communities, forming local partnerships to develop holistic methods to deal with socio-economic issues in local areas (Duffy and Hutchinson 1997; Wagner, Vogt and

Kabst 2016), and lately the intention has shifted to now increase the quality of policymaking processes and obtain citizen support for the decisions (Wagner, Vogt and Kabst 2016; Evans-Cowley and Hollander 2010; Lourenço and Costa 2007; Irvin and Stansbury 2004). This leads to the assumption that while the methods and stages by which public participation is conducted are problematic, requiring rigour and quality, the intent for community involvement in matters that affect them is only gaining further importance (Duffy and Hutchinson 1997).

Scholars (Cohen et al. 2015; Innes and Booher 2004, Healey 1997) have identified ‘dialogue’ as one of the main factors in successful public participation. It is important because participants who listen to and inform each other can develop new ideas and shared meanings (Cohen et al. 2015). Dialogues, however, are effective only when they go beyond discussing abstract values, but instead focus on clear issues and problems—problems that affect people directly (Fung and Wright 2016). The participatory process should involve these people and they should be given an opportunity to deliberate solutions to these problems, along with building trust, being inclusive and focussing on spatial relationships (Healey 1997).

Public participation is a process by which citizens and local communities take part in local development programs that affect them directly or indirectly. This can be through formal invitations by the local government (top-down approach) or informal collective community representations to the government (bottom-up approach). It is a process by which local residents and businesses interact with governments regarding development projects in their region.

This chapter evaluates the many aspects and practical implications of *public participation in urban development programs*. It explores the various definitions and terminologies in use, how it is practised in relation to urban development, the politics and debate around its usefulness, theoretical structures and practical tools in use for engaging with the public, and the benefits and shortcomings of using public participation in the decision-making process on matters related to sustainable urban development policies and practices.

3.1 Definitions and Understanding

Public participation can also be called ‘civic engagement’ and sometimes ‘community engagement’. The various connotations, including geospatial popularity (Crozier and Butteriss 2014), associated with the use of these different terms is briefly described below.

‘Public participation’ is a term used by the United Nations in its Agenda 21, urging nations to commit to a global partnership on development and environment cooperation. This term is also used by Australian academics, PIA and Australian local governments. Although the Parliament of Australia does use the term ‘civic engagement’ or ‘citizen engagement’, it appears to be used in the same context.

‘Community engagement’ and ‘public engagement’ are seen more often in literature by Australians and South African scholars, while ‘citizen engagement’ and ‘civic engagement’ are terms that are heard often in Canada and the USA. ‘Public involvement’ is a term rarely seen, with a few references to it by scholars and agencies in the UK.

The term ‘community consultation’ seems to have been quite popular 25 years ago, and the preferred term these days is ‘engagement’ as ‘consultation’ is perceived to be not as serious as ‘engagement’ (Crozier and Butteriss 2014).

In highly political debates around urban planning systems, some scholars use the term ‘community deliberation’ (McAfee and Legacy 2016; Healey 1997; Innes 1995), as a process that relies heavily on face-to-face interactions creating new knowledge around current issues and finding innovative solutions that are easily accepted by all stakeholders.

PIA officially endorses the term ‘participation’ over ‘engagement’, with this guidance note: ‘Engagement could be misunderstood to mean collaboration in decision making or empowerment to every occasion; while participation refers to involvement of people in the process of planning, including even where it may empower the community to initiate planning’ (PIA n.d.).

Public participation in urban planning and development was included in the legal system around the 1990s in most democratic countries, to encourage ‘collaborative planning

between governments and citizens' (Chado, Johar and Zayyanu 2016). However, it cannot still be claimed that legislated public participation methods are efficient, sometimes requiring public activism tools to achieve the goals of sustainable urban development. Thus, public participation methods can be grouped into two types: statutory participation and voluntary participation. Statutory participation is the legislated requirement for planning authorities, making it mandatory for them to engage with the public—a top-down approach to public participation where the public are provoked to become conscious of the proposed changes. Conversely, voluntary participation is initiated by the citizens, usually voicing their opinions and guiding changes to a certain policy or development plan or project—a bottom-up approach. This form of participation requires citizens to be vigilant and conscious of their local environment. Both forms of participation techniques have their own limitations and challenges which are discussed in detail in section 3.5.

Public participation has been identified as an important decision-making process, especially in the areas of sustainable urban development (Cohen et al. 2015; Williamson and Ruming 2020; Mahdavinejad and Amini 2011; Cohen and Wiek 2017; Stelzle 2019; Stelzle and Noennig 2017; Ma 2017; Legacy et al. 2018; Innes and Booher 2004; Duffy and Hutchinson 1997; Fedotova, Teixeira and Alvelos 2012). Most literature on public participation assigns it to be a critical component of legitimising bureaucratic decisions for two reasons: to improve and expand the information base, and to enhance accountability by allowing public scrutiny (Yang and Callahan 2007; Chado, Johar and Zayyanu 2016; Irvin and Stansbury 2004; Hatley 2013). By involvement of the public in the decision-making process, it is assumed that, in theory, democracy has been achieved and the decisions become legitimate. This assumption is problematic because it tends to become symbolic and may not deliver a true collaborative outcome—which is the main intention of public participation. There are many reasons why public participation could fail in achieving its goals. This is discussed in detail in section 3.6.

3.2 Public Participation in Urban Development

In the matters of urban issues, in 1982, the UK, responding to the perception that inner-city problems of the country were the consequence of market failure, set up an initiative called the ‘action for cities’ program. The report identified the importance of involvement of the city residents to build up the capacity to help themselves. This report stressed the importance of the contribution that local people can make to revitalise their local areas, which in this case was inner cities.

In the context of cultural landscape management (although it would be true for any development/management programs), public participation adjusts the relation between inhabitants and their local environment. Public preferences become necessary to ensure social acceptance of proposed activities. There is great value when the urban planner/designer listens to, draws up and is transformed by the local knowledge and needs of the user (Ibrahim and Amin 2015). Scholars advocate that planners should interact with the public for whom the plan is being made, and the stakeholders should be given the opportunity to evaluate future options to make the best decision that they all support (Mahmoud and Arima 2011). It could be argued that planners do not necessarily have all the local knowledge and understanding to prepare a holistic sustainable development plan for a given region, and hence, it is important for them to engage with the local community and gain deep insights into the workings of not only the land but also the community itself (Mahmoud and Arima 2011). In contrast, it can also be debated that citizens do not have the long-term vision; nor are they necessarily deeply invested in the matters of social, economic or environmental sustainability (Innes and Booher 2004). However, much can be achieved when the authorities and the citizens collaborate effectively to achieve desirable results. ‘Theoretical and empirical research suggest that collaboration and participation by stakeholders in decision making, particularly by local residents is critical for successful plan development and project implementation’ (Hawkins and Wang 2012).

The degree of citizen empowerment directly corresponds to the level of involvement, with the assumption that greater levels of involvement increase effectiveness (Arnstein 1969), and a collaborative and participatory approach to policy development produces more just and equitable outcomes and is more functional than a top-down method of decision-making (Sandercock 1970, 1975, 1998; Stretton 1976, 1989, 2005; Hawkins and

Wang 2012). Spatial planning policies and projects require good knowledge of the local environment, socio-cultural practices and circumstances, and if executed properly, public participation is a powerful tool for integrating local tacit knowledge into planning and development programs (Sandercock 1975; T. Berman 2017). Tacit knowledge, which is imperceptible to experts, is a ‘significant body of knowledge’ that may be useful for spatial planning and make it more successful (Krimsky 1984, quoted in T. Berman 2017). Some public participation models not only improve decision-making processes but also, most importantly, assist in bridging social capital and developing inclusive communities (Pogačar and Žižek 2016).

PIA supports the United Nations Brisbane Declaration on Community Engagement—‘that community engagement is critical, effective, transparent and accountable governance in the public, community and private sectors’ (PIA n.d.). Public participation or community engagement in relation to urban planning mainly addresses land use policies, historic preservation, development plans and practices, farm land preservation, character preservation, and zoning activities. This thesis uses the term ‘public participation’ in the first part for the sake of consistency of usage of the term in relevant literature. However, for the empirical part of the research, the term ‘community engagement’ has been preferred, to be in line with the vocabulary used by the local authorities and local communities.

3.3 Public Participation—Informs or Empowers?

Cities that facilitate interactions between local governments and civil society, actively engage in community interests, and share knowledge among stakeholders are more likely to adopt meaningful policies, especially in relation to sustainable development (Sandercock 1970, 1975, 1998; Stretton 1976, 1989, 2005; Hawkins and Wang 2012). Reaching out to stakeholders, sharing information openly, engaging people in meaningful interaction and attempting to satisfy multiple interest positions make for successful processes. An engaged community supported through public participation and collaboration processes provides for learning opportunities. Some of the other objectives of public participation are to contribute to capacity building and to help build civic infrastructure.

In a study investigating sustainable development at a local level, Hawkins and Wang (2012) state that decisions on policies for matters such as economic development and sustainable growth should be made in a manner that is open and equitable, and has minimal environmental impact and resource consumption. Because of these interdependencies, it is essential to manage relationships among local residents, support network organisations and local governments. Public participation improves administrative knowledge and helps make sound decisions.

In their National Position Statement of 2011, PIA presented the possible types of public participation, showing the increasing level of impact as the public participation moves from ‘inform’ through to ‘empower’ (PIA n.d.). The simplest form of public participation is ‘information’, where the authorities promise to keep the public informed about the decisions. Tools used here include public announcements in the media, fact sheets, websites and conducting open houses. In this method, there is no opportunity for the public to provide any kind of feedback. It would be assumed that the community has handed over the decision-making power to either their elected representatives or the bureaucratic administrators.

The next level of public participation is ‘consultation’, where public opinion is sought. In most cases, it is a legislated requirement to ‘consult’ local communities on matters that affect them, particularly in the area of sustainable urban development, through surveys, focus groups, public meetings and public comment sheets. However, this form of public participation is usually at a rudimentary level and does not fully capture the sentiments and aspirations of the public to enrich the decision-making process effectively.

The third form of public participation—‘involvement’—engages with people more deeply, where the authorities have an obligation to reflect and develop alternatives to address the concerns and suggestions expressed by the public. Methods of ‘involving’ the public include workshops, small group discussions and deliberate polling. This form is probably more effective in responding to community needs and aspirations; however, this is still unidirectional and has a top-down approach to addressing issues and decision-making processes. On the other hand, the ‘collaboration’ form of public participation is more useful because, by its very nature, the authorities partner with the community to plan, find alternatives and make decisions that can be validated by all stakeholders. Methods of collaboration include setting up citizen advisory committees, consensus

building workshops and participatory decision-making sessions. However, these methods may be slow, consuming a lot of time and resources for all stakeholders. The final form of public participation—‘empowering’—aims to place the responsibility of the final decision-making in the hands of the community by organising citizen juries, ballots and delegated decisions. While this might sound like the best form of public participation, with the highest impact, the methods employed for achieving this leaves very little scope for discussions and exploring alternatives, with no room for the process of iterations through learning. Asking the public for a binary decision has its own challenges and limitations.

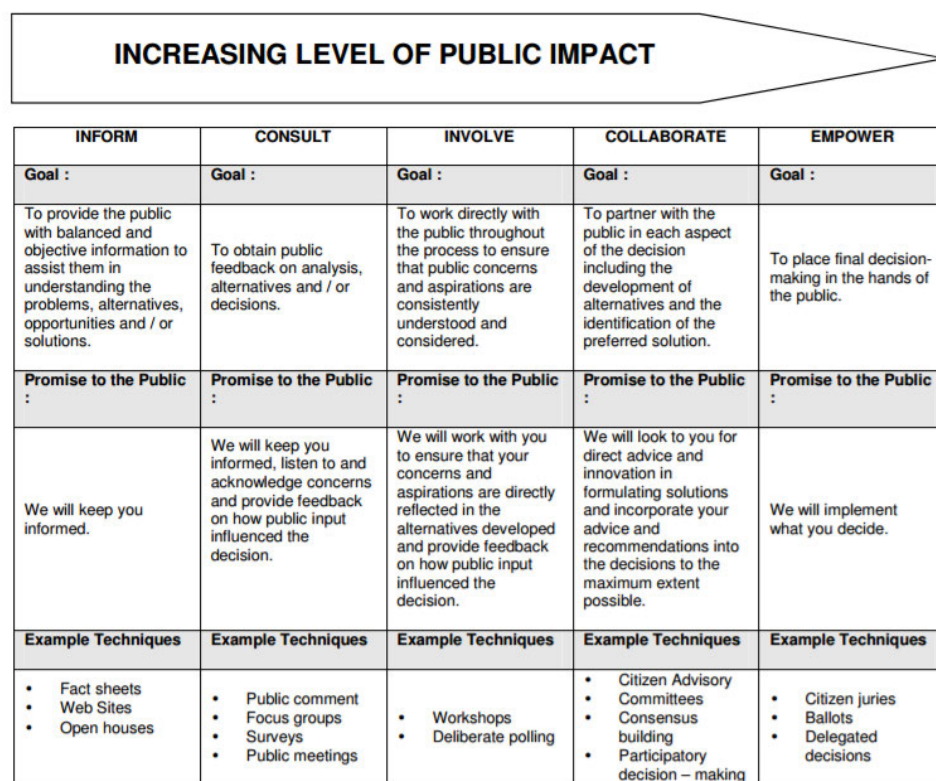


Figure 3.1: PIA’s Public Participation Spectrum (Source: PIA 2011)

Christopher Plein (Plein, Green and Williams 1998) identifies two main systems in which the public are invited to participate: the more popular model, where the public are brought in to comment on a development project or policy well after the initial plans have been drawn up and it is ready for finalising, and the other more important model, which scholars and practitioners are arguing for, where there is more inclusive citizen involvement right from the beginning, with discussions about current problems and iteration of possible paths of solutions. However, it must be noted that if the citizens are not aligned with the overarching plans and goals for urban development, then no matter

what model is adopted, it may not lead to any favourable outcomes (Cohen and Wiek 2017).

This research explores the different methods of public participation employed in Willunga Basin across various urban development projects, studying the rationale for choosing various methods, critiquing outcomes from these engagements, and analysing the impact on the cultural and urban landscape of the region.

Most contemporary constitutions are democratic and uphold the idea that it is the will of people that directs their way of life. This implies that every citizen of that country/region has a right to participate in the process of law making. This stems from the concept of legitimacy, which links people, government and the legislators.

In Australia, since the late 1900s, urban planning has aligned with neoliberalism (Gleeson and Low 2000, Allmendinger 2002, Allmendinger and Haughton 2013), while at the same time moving away from expert-led planning and towards collaborative planning and decision-making, inspired by theories of communicative rationale (Habermas 1979; Healey 1997; Innes 1995; Legacy et al. 2018, Brunckhorst et al 2018). Neoliberalism tends to focus on economic rationality leading to competition and privatisation, where the voices of social equity and environmental sustainability are diminished (Harvey 2006). However, despite the many efforts of city planners to engage with the public, particularly for planning their neighbourhoods, Australian cities are notable for passionate resident-led campaigns against injustices over urban landscapes (Stretton 1988; Legacy et al. 2018; McAfee and Legacy 2016) based on the perception that there are very few opportunities to provide meaningful feedback. In Australia, in the process of framing new regulations or creating amendments to existing development plans and regulations, legislation allows for public participation at only two levels.

The topic of public participation in the framing of policies, rules and regulations has been debated over for a while. Public participation is regarded as the right of people to be involved in decision-making processes, especially when those decisions affect their lives and lifestyles. Some scholars consider this an important part of promoting inclusiveness and access to collective intelligence and local knowledge.

3.4 Structure and Mechanism of Public Participation

While it has been commonly accepted that public participation or civic engagement is an important aspect of the democratic process of local governance, the structure of representing the community has always remained a challenge. This is due to the different definitions of community and the challenge that exists to include selection of partners, their degree and level of involvement, unequal positions in terms of both power and polity, clash of cultures and norms, and different degrees of commitment and working styles (Duffy and Hutchinson 1997), as well as the low level of knowledge available on the various possible tools and methods that can be employed and at what stage of development they are to be applied (Stelzle and Noennig 2017). Cohen (2015) identifies three types of agents who are involved in a urban development project that applies to public participation: strategic agents, who are the elected officials and investors who supervise the project; operating agents, who are the city staff and project partners carrying out the projects; and participating stakeholders, who are the residents, non-profits and local businesses providing input through a structured process. Community groups, citizens and businesses, who are generally the ones most affected, tend to have power in partnerships generally only at the operational levels and not so much at the strategic levels (Sandercock 1975, 1990, 2010; Stretton 1988, 1989, 2005). This in itself is problematic because many decisions taken at strategic levels can rarely be rectified at operational levels; however, it is also very rare to find conscious communities that have the level of expertise required to engage in strategic decisions. This calls for developing new mechanisms to involve citizens, including stakeholder collaborations, transparent communication and community engagement activities (Habermas 1979; Hawkins and Wang 2012).

Public participatory mechanisms can also be of different types: legislated minimum requirements, self-organised activism, unidirectional procedures, collaborative engagements, statutory mechanisms and voluntary methods (Chado, Johar and Zayyanu 2016; Cohen et al. 2015; Cohen and Wiek 2017; T. Berman 2017). All of these can broadly be categorised into two main categories: top-down approach and bottom-up or grassroots movements. In top-down approaches, it is part of the government mandate to include citizens in their urban development projects in various ways and at different stages. This can include media announcements, public consultation meetings, surveys,

call for opinions, focus group meetings, workshops, citizen juries and other similar protocols. However, these approaches are unidirectional and have only two stakeholders—authorities and citizens. Such an approach tends to exclude the public from planning and political systems by its very nature, whereby it alienates the citizens as ‘them’ (as in an ‘us and them’ scenario) and expects ‘them’ to be capable of presenting arguments using the right vocabulary, within a certain time limit, despite lacking adequate qualifications or training (T. Berman 2017). In a bottom-up approach, even though public participation could be initiated from either the governing agency or a voluntary self-organised group of people, by its very nature, it adopts a collaborative method of communication between community groups and the authorities, and is driven by the community groups adopting a consultation process, reaching out to all the citizens to participate in the planning and political processes. This enables a continuous, ongoing dialogue between the citizens and the jurisdiction and is found to be more comprehensive (T. Berman 2017). Top-down approaches, similar to unidirectional procedures, tend to follow the minimum legislated processes and fail to capture and incorporate local knowledge into planning, whereas bottom-up approaches motivated by community groups set up better collaborative initiatives and tend to be more successful in the extraction and implementation of local knowledge in planning (T. Berman 2017; Pogačar and Žižek 2016; Cohen et al. 2015; Cohen and Wiek 2017).

While all kinds of public participation are voluntary, authors (Chado, Johar and Zayyanu 2016) identify the bottom-up or grassroots approach to public participation as the opposite of statutory participation and call it ‘voluntary participation’. Voluntary participation is an informal practice that comes into being from an ethical or moral position. This kind of participation is usually developed unofficially and primarily initiated by citizens, who form a formal or informal community/group/ cooperative, usually by private sector planners, academics and NGOs.

The 2015 Maribor experiment (Pogačar and Žižek 2016) with ‘urban hackathons’ proved that ‘top down approaches for city development were not successful anymore’, using new tools for public participation enables a broader participation of stakeholders, and facilitating information and data exchange empowers the participants and they move from ‘talking about ideas’ to ‘showing results’, especially in renewal of old city centres. They

emphasise transparency, accountability, enforcement and deploy ‘open data movement’ in their model.

In the process of appropriate urban growth, especially at the fringe, Douglas (2012) shows that it is important for urban developers to exhibit cultural sincerity and meet the cultural sensitivity expectations of local communities in order to gain acceptance easily. Much of the heartaches of community activism could be avoided by providing for a mechanism in the urban growth machine to account for cultural expectations through well-formulated democratic expression.

For citizens to be motivated and engaged in local development processes, it is necessary for them to embrace ‘community character’, have a common vision for their region, and be able to access resources to organise their actions through a focused community network (Hatley 2013). Hatley’s explanatory model ‘Preserving Place’ explores a collaborative process to address conflicts among citizens, planners, local governments, private landowners and land development interests, in contrast to value judgements such as ‘activist’, ‘anti-growth’, ‘NIMBY (Not in My BackYard)’ and ‘greedy developers’, and engage in authentic dialogue. Such conflicts can only be diffused with carefully structured participation models and appropriate tools of engagement.

3.5 Methods and Tools for Public Participation

There are many ways in which the authorities can engage with the public for feedback, consultation and taking an active part in the decision-making process. The most popular instruments are issuing public notifications inviting the public to submit feedback, focus group workshops, polls, surveys and holding community information sessions. South Australia has recently (2016) adopted a new community engagement strategy called ‘Have Your Say’, conducting industry workshops, community focus groups, regional tours and creating opportunities to speak directly with the decision-makers. However, there is no one repository of reference or failproof tool of public participation that can be prescribed for a particular community. Stelzle and Noennig (2017) have started an online database called ‘Method Bank’ providing a quick overview of about 70 participation tools used by around 30 municipalities in Germany and their efficacy. This database can be accessed by planners, authorities and managers. This database is associated with the EU H2020 project ‘U_CODE Urban Collective Design Environment’—an ambitious project

creating an online platform for architects, urban designers and developers to co-design with the public. Sarkissian, Perlgut and Ballard (1986) and Sarkissian and Bunjamin-Mau (2009) present an exhaustive list of resources for public engagement and community workshops in the urban and regional planning process.

This research does not embark on such detailed study of tools used across the world, or across Australia, but limits itself to exploring the mechanisms of public participation (both top-down and bottom-up) in use in the Willunga Basin to explore its efficacy in maintaining community identities despite the urbanisation of the region. However, for establishing the practical implications of this research, some of the tools and experiments in public participation for urban development have been described below.

Virtual reality: One of the difficulties of public participation is delivering the ideas to the public and assisting them to visualise the proposed initiatives. To overcome this, some developers and local governments have started using spatial multimedia including text, photography, 3D computer graphics, animation and virtual reality to enhance visualisation by the general public, who are most likely not trained to read architectural/technical drawings and imagine the possibilities. In a study conducted in Japan, a prototype computer system was developed (Mahmoud and Arima 2011) using virtual reality, 3D animation, digital support systems, websites and polls for the project proposal—Plaza Urban Development Project at Kyushu University, Japan. Users were invited to use these visualisation tools and interact with decision-makers. The study showed that 75% of the users had never participated in any urban projects, and 65% of them stated that this system encouraged them to participate more in the future. While the researchers found some challenges with this model, such as discouraging people who prefer face-to-face interactions and those who might not be technologically literate, availability of technological resources at local government levels, and cost of implementation and evaluation, this may be a promising model if integrated with other models such as face-to-face workshops and urban hackathons.

Hackathons: Kaja Pogačar and Andrew Žižek of Maribor (Pogačar and Žižek 2016) discuss the case study of the three urban hackathons held at Maribor in 2015 as part of ‘actors for urban change program’ developed by the Robert Bosch Foundation. These two-day events to activate, inform and empower the public over revitalising the old city centre were held at different times of the year (January, April and October) with three

different themes. Participants included municipal officers, university students/researchers, experts from various fields of urban development, local communities and NGOs. This method mainly used digital tools—websites with all relevant strategic documents made available to the public (which had never been done before) and urban tags, where participants marked degraded locations, linking them to the website and wiki-strategy platform for participants to edit the strategies for urban renewal. Traditional approaches, such as real-time mapping using large prints of maps and coloured pins, encouraging passing pedestrians to point to issues on the map, and traffic monitoring were also used. As a result of this multi-modal approach, the hackathons proved to be a success in generating broad participation and tangible problem solving, and most importantly triggering self-led civil initiatives. The organisers attributed this success to ‘easy access to information’, establishing the principle of ‘direct action’, using technology-based tools, and the moderated approach to brainstorming and open discussions. The authors clearly state that this experiment ‘transformed citizens from passive consumers to active participants in the decision-making process and being co-creators of urban space’.

Organic planning: Christopher Plein et al. (Plein, Green and Williams 1998) discuss a new form of citizen participation called ‘organic planning’, which is independent of institutional sponsorship, is more process oriented and offers a distinctive venue of deliberation. This method focuses not only on the citizen involvement outside of the established institutional arrangements, but also on how public officials and institutions gain access to citizen-led discussions. This puts the government actors in a unique position of being involved in the discussion forums, but not as the centre of attention or in a position to dictate or guide the course of events. However, organic systems do tend to run down and deteriorate once the initial enthusiasm and energy has been consumed. Further, organic planning is most effective in civic dialogue and discourse, rather than in achieving public policy outcomes. Thus, this method may work best only for specific issues with shorter goals and time frames.

Visually enhanced sustainability conversations (VESC): Matthew Cohen (Cohen et al. 2015) and others evaluate a public participation process in Phoenix, Arizona, in which researchers collaborated with city planners and facilitated a conversation around sustainability using VESC as a tool to enable better alignment of stakeholder literacy over

matters of sustainability. This tool made use of posters, where sustainable development goals were broken down into small objectives, and participants voted, discussed, and suggested additional elements by using sticky notes. Some of the challenges of this method were that the terminologies were not simplified enough and the translation to Spanish was not perfect. Images used were not enough to convey the idea. However, there was a much better response to this method, with respondents saying that ‘it stimulated conversation’. This method planted ideas in participants minds and initiated a creative thinking process.

Mixed methods: Sarkissian and Hurford (2010) promote the use of multiple methods of engagement, including embodiment processes, where people can move around; guided imagery/creative visualisation, called ‘heartstorming’; and children’s parties, where professionals are asked to think beyond accepted and inherent paradigms and engage with children because they do not have the inhibitions adults often have. The authors emphasise that rational thinking alone is not sufficient to solve the issues we are currently facing, arguing that rational thinking is useful when ‘dealing with the known and its conventions’, but less effective when presented with the challenge of creating something new.

As can be seen from some of the above examples, there is no one size that fits all. Each community is unique; their region is unique, and hence, the public participation tool that may work best for that community has to be carefully chosen. In the case of Willunga Basin, a proactively engaged citizenry has adopted and evolved various types of tools for engaging within the community and with the authorities to direct development policies and practices in the region.

3.6 Benefits and Shortcomings of Public Participation in Urban Development

Public participation is seen as a critical component to legitimizing bureaucratic decision by firstly broadening public input, improving and expanding the information/knowledge base of the administrative decision; secondly by enhancing the accountability by opening up deliberations to public scrutiny.

(Kerwin 1994, quoted in Plein, Green and Williams, *Organic planning: A new approach to public participation in local governance*, 1998, p. 510)

While most scholars favour public participation, particularly in the matters of environmental protection and urban development, there are debates over the worthiness of involving citizens in the governing process, especially in a representative democratic system, because of additional costs, poorly educated or complacent citizens, and self-interest groups (E. Berman 1997; Irvin and Stansbury 2004; Smith 2001; R. Lawrence and Deagen 2001; Weeks 2000). One of the main goals of public participation is to correct this disconnection between citizens and governments in addressing pressing issues and challenges and no doubt, the effectiveness of public participation lies in the methods that are employed to collaborate between both agencies (Healey 1997).

It is broadly accepted that citizens have a right to be involved in matters that affect them directly or indirectly; however, in practice, public participation poses many challenges and complexities. When people with limited understanding of long-term impacts and basic knowledge of legislative institutions participate, it generally leads to complex and frustrating debates (Cohen and Wiek 2017; Cohen et al. 2015; Cohen 2015). In such circumstances, civic education and methods of provoked consciousness become a very important aspect of public participatory exercises.

Cohen (2015) mentions social learning as an important and common potential benefit of public participation. He defines 'social learning as experiences in which participants build understanding and shape their values through collaboration with others'. Other benefits of public participation include 'building social capital' (Osborne et al. 2017), 'revitalising civic culture' and 'increased transparency in political actions'.

Cohen and Weik (2017) identify common challenges to public participation, which occur when the public participation process does not align with the local context. The biggest challenge for sustainable development, however, is when participants are not literate in sustainability and public inputs are incompatible with sustainability goals and objectives. The same could be said of any development goal. If the citizens are not aligned with the goals of the local government, public participation can be chaotic and will require further constructive dialogue to seek compromises, find a common understanding and enable goal-oriented outcomes to influence policy decisions (Cohen 2015).

Public participation can be a powerful tool, especially in addressing complex issues and strategic planning and implementation; however, while Vancouver in Canada seems to

have adopted it successfully, other North American and Australian cities are yet to realise its full potential (McAfee and Legacy 2016)⁵. When implemented with genuine intentions to find a collaborative solution, public participation educates the stakeholders, creates new knowledge and finds innovative solutions.

Some of the reasons why public participation may be ineffective is when it becomes a *symbolic* gesture rather than a genuine interest in involving the public in matters that affect them (Vidyarthi, Hoch and Basmajian 2013; Chado, Johar and Zayyanu 2016; Cohen and Wiek 2017; Begg 2016). Sometimes, not all sections of the community have the opportunity or interest to voice their opinions/concern and the voice of the community that is more vested in the outcomes becomes stronger (Vidyarthi, Hoch and Basmajian 2013; Duffy and Hutchinson 1997). Misunderstandings between the community and non-community partners could also lead to failed discussions, especially when there is no willingness between stakeholders to cooperate (Duffy and Hutchinson 1997; Wagner, Vogt and Kabst 2016). At times, however, it is due to the fact that the representations sound incoherent to the authorities, who are disconnected from the community's vocabulary (Maina 2013; Chado, Johar and Zayyanu 2016). Frustrating collective decision-making procedures also add to the reasons for failed negotiations (Duffy and Hutchinson 1997).

While public participation is a desired process in local governance and found to be productive, there are many barriers that influence the effectiveness of the decision-making process. While there is much encouragement and moves towards public participation, the assumption that engaged citizenry will fix the issues of central planning models and governance has been challenged and debunked, at least in many post-colonial contexts of the developing countries (Fischer 2016).

Despite the well-established need for public participation and well-intentioned attempts by governments to include the public in the decision-making processes, many regions have faced insignificant interest by the public to participate. This is especially noticed when the governments run programs and initiatives to encourage public participation. Chado et al. (2016) assign these poor turnouts to various factors and categorise them into

⁵ McAfee and Legacy (2016) refer specifically to community deliberation under a more communicative and collaborative approach. The scholars are referenced here since public participation is considered to align with community collaborations.

two groups: institutional-based factors and individual-based factors. Institutional factors include lack of transparency, lack of adequate consultation with professional bodies, inadequate communication between the government and local residents, and late notices. Individual factors are cultural, socio-economic and environmental factors. Socio-economic issues, such as educational qualification, lack of access to information, marginalisation by authorities, and lack of time and money, hinder participation. Cultural elements, such as ethnic differences, orientation, experience, and lack of structural ties with the government, also discourage public participation at an individual level.

One study (Wagner, Vogt and Kabst 2016) shows that policymakers agree that the developments in public participation mechanisms are positive and desirable, but the **execution** of participation opportunities is not well advanced. Citizens' passiveness (or exclusion) is also a major reason for local governments failing to spark future urban developments (Pogačar and Žižek 2016). A study conducted in 6th of October City in Egypt (Ibrahim and Amin 2015) measures the residents' willingness to participate in decision-making approaches and finds that **income and social levels** play a significant role in their levels of participation. Another study (Fischer 2016), set in rural India, identifies that, in reality, there is a significant influence on state services from unelected power brokers, while the general public—embedded in systems that marginalise them, such as **caste, gender and class**—hardly have any voice in public decision-making processes. This shows that the strategies for active citizenship might need to be better equipped to navigate complex social structures and value systems before it begins to reflect the true public aspirations.

As Kendig and Keast (2010) reiterate, 'planning for community character requires that architects, planners, urban designers, policymakers and citizens all clearly communicate their goals ... Unfortunately, many of these groups seem to speak different languages'. For this kind of communication to be successful, those involved must first all speak the same language. Kendig and Keast (2010) have prepared a lexicon using terms that are already in use by these professionals and have added more terms. While this may be a notable attempt to bridge the communication gap between the groups, it is more important to create a legislative requirement that there is appropriate engagement between the groups, even before any development policies are created/amended.

Sometimes, even when the interest and willingness to participate is high, lack of resources might discourage an individual or group from participating in the decision-making processes. Those least able to afford the cost of information and opportunities are often excluded (Plein, Green and Williams 1998). Lack of opportunities, coupled with low socio-economic status, can lead to apathy towards staying conscious of the existing environment and its future. As seen in the case of the Arizona experiment (Cohen 2015), lack of education, and lack of understanding on the matters of sustainability and impact of urbanisation, may be overcome with the right tools, which align public participation processes.

Thus, it can be seen that there is rich literature on practical implications of participatory approaches, providing a stable context, within which this research is located. This is further strengthened in the next chapter, where bioregionalism is explored further, particularly around intangible local knowledge that can only be imparted through direct engagement.

Chapter 4: Bioregionalism (Theoretical Framework)

If bioregionalism were implemented, culture, economy, architecture and products of different regions would gradually regain their distinctive regional qualities.

(Janis Birkeland, *Positive Development*, 2008, p. 208)

This chapter examines the term bioregionalism to develop a theoretical framework to guide this research which seeks to provide insight into sustainable development at the fringe. The chapter further considers how theories of bioregionalism might guide the future of urban development at the fringe to achieve holistic sustainable growth.

The term ‘bioregionalism’ was first coined in the 1970s by Allen Van Newkirk, who founded the Institute for Bioregional Research, but it was Peter Berg and Raymond Dasmann who carried out seminal work to establish bioregionalism within the literature on environmentalism and place-based activism (McGinnis 1996). Relevant theoretical literature on bioregionalism has been produced mainly by geographers, anthropologists, environmentalists and social scientists, challenging the industrial and corporate globalism with decentralised, regional and localised models (Sale 2000; Thayer 2003; Carr 2000; Aberley 1999; McGinnis 1996; Berg 1978; 2009; Snyder 1995; T. Berman 2017; Church 2014; Brunckhorst 2005; Whitaker 2005; Thackara 2019). Architectural and urban planning scholars, such as Sarah Church (2013), Janis Birkeland (2008) and Paul Downton (2002), also promote this theory in their works as an important means to achieve urban sustainability. Bioregionalism is a paradigm that has been ignored by many and critiqued by some (McCann 2011; D. Alexander 1990), not so much with regard to the theories, but more about the lack of mandate on how such utopian ideals might be implemented. However, the philosophy of bioregionalism provides a useful framework for this research due to intersections with the concepts of biophysical regions, environmentalism, local knowledge of people living within a region and the politics of urbanising specific regions, particularly at the fringe of large metropolitan regions.

Concepts such as ‘knowing the land’, ‘learning the lore’, ‘people who know where their water comes from tend to be more careful in how they use it’, ‘understanding the place’, ‘developing the potential’, ‘land ethic’, and the importance of incorporating human relationships with the natural world (Leopold 1949, 2014; Sale 2000; Thayer 2003) all

stem from studies of bioregionalism. The use of the term bioregion, together with bioregional planning and bioregionalism, is not uniform. Australia restricts the use of the terms bioregion and bioregional planning primarily to natural environments and resources outside of human settlement areas. Europe tends to associate the term bioregion with cultural landscapes. In the United States, the term bioregion is often applied to dismantle political boundaries, or to emphasise intangible social or natural boundaries of a given place. In the United States use of the term bioregion can also refer to places of ecological and cultural symbiosis whereby efforts are made to achieve self-sufficiency or to displace notions of anthropocentric place or community – as Aldo Leopold advocated in *A Sand County Almanac* – to include soil, water, plants, animals and, collectively, the land within which they are all located (Leopold 1949; Birkeland 2012; Berg 2001).

This research adopts the notion of ‘bioregion’ as used by Paul Downton and Janis Birkeland to define a region on the basis of its watersheds, including social values, cultural practices and local knowledge, and to plan for ecological cities/neighbourhoods based on regional carrying capacities. Canizaro (2012) also reiterates that the ‘criteria for making bioregional distinctions are biotic shift, watershed, land form, cultural, phenomenological, spirit presences and elevation’. Bioregions rarely have abrupt edges, and are usually part of a larger ecozone (Tabb 2021); the regional scale, however, is an opportunity to be sensitive to sense of place and local knowledge. Each bioregion achieves its own unique identity by the combination of geological structure, topography, soil type, vegetation, animal life and climate, creating a state of dynamic equilibrium, which influences cultural characteristics of the human population that resides within it. People living within a bioregion experience the same natural phenomena, breathe the same air and face the same challenges. Bioregions influence regional occupations and economy, thereby providing a common context for life and unifying the communities by providing a regional identity (Gary Coates, quoted in Canizaro 2012).

Adrian Atkinson (1992) discusses and lists in detail how bioregional development could be considered as a new type of urbanism, which relies on its immediate hinterland for its economic growth. The strategies he proposes involve recognising and limiting a region’s boundaries to watershed areas and translating that into different types of land allocation and management techniques. Motivated by this framing of bioregionalism, this chapter discusses the many arguments made for and against bioregionalism as a new paradigm

and a theoretical framework that can be applied to urbanism, with the potential to achieve sustainable development goals, particularly at the rural-urban fringe, by addressing the intangible socio-cultural aspects of local communities through efficient public participation techniques.

4.1 Understanding Bioregions and Bioregionalism

This section will clarify the difference between biospheres and bioregions. While biospheres and bioregions might sound the same and be considered interchangeable, the ways in which they are identified, managed and valued are very different. Biospheres are natural ecosystems with a strictly protected ‘core area’ around which are small rural human habitats, where much of the activity is focused on scientific research to understand ecological processes. Bioregions, although based on ecosystems, are more focused on human habitations and their relationship with their immediate natural environment. While there is no clear method to demarcate the boundaries of a biosphere, bioregional boundaries can be drawn using criteria such as physiographical, vegetational and hydrological (watershed) characteristics, and even terrains of consciousness based on *where people think they exist* (D. Alexander 1990, 2017; Carr 2000).

As described above, the concept of bioregions was established in the early 1970s, but apart from a few groups of scholars, authors, poets and writers, there was no formal recognition of this term. UNESCO established the ‘Man and Biosphere’ program in the early 1970s, providing a framework for linking protected areas with their associated working landscapes (Matysek, Stratford and Kriwoken 2006). Similar to bioregional planning paradigms, biosphere reserve programs focus on local community participation, integrated land use management, environmental education and training, ecologically sustainable development, and in situ conservation and restorations (Weller and Bolleter 2013; Brunckhorst 2000). Biospheres are formally recognised by UNESCO, while bioregions are more socio-culturally recognised areas, with less administrative authority (D. Alexander 2017).

Both concepts of biosphere and bioregion are bound by geographical factors and seek to preserve and restore ecological functions through *sustainable integration* of human activities; however, they differ mainly in how they are practised. Bioregional principles are located primarily within the framework of urbanism and sustainable development,

while mandates for recognising a biosphere are based on how well the local authorities manage to restore or maintain the status quo of existing ecosystems. Managing and maintaining a biosphere relies totally on ecological principles, with a hint of social learning (UNESCO 2017), while bioregionalism relies more on intangible philosophies of ‘living-in-place’, ‘land ethics’, ‘life-place’, ‘reinhabitation’, ‘place attachments’ and ‘sense of belonging’ to achieve sustainability (D. Alexander 2017; Sale 2000; Thayer 2003; Berg 2015; Brunckhorst 2000; Snyder 1995; Beatley 2005; Leopold 1949, 2014;).

Although the term ‘region’ referred to the city and surrounds in the early 1900s, the term started to take on different meanings after the 1980s, with Kenneth Frampton (1985, 2007) popularising the term ‘critical regionalism’ as the desire to be culturally, economically and politically self-sufficient. Although introduced in the 1970s, the concept of ‘new regionalism’ started to develop only later in the 1990s. The year 2000 saw a significant amount of scholarly work on the concept of bioregions, bioregionalism and bioregional urbanism.

The vision of bioregionalism (Young 2000) defines a bioregion as a holistic blend of the three types of region—functional, formal and vernacular—and implies that if one were to envision a bioregion as a place where people dwell, rather than a place they coincidentally occupy, then it is possible to imagine that everything within the region is natural, including the people.⁶ Everything is where it belongs; nothing is out-of-place, and a natural harmonious relationship predominates between people and the ecosystem. Thus, the nature–culture dichotomy, a root cause of modern problems, disappears in a bioregional framework.

Bioregionalism is a way of examining classifications of human-inhabited areas. Brunckhorst (2000) uses the term ‘bioregion’ to refer to a regional-landscape scale of matching social and ecological functions as a unit of governance for future sustainability that can be flexible and congruent. He stated that a bioregion is an integration of human governance with ecological law, while regionalisation as a process is a form of spatial classification through which boundaries are drawn around relatively homogeneous areas at a defined level of detail. Regionalisation is developed and applied to a range of disciplines—ecological, social, cultural and economic—to classify information, observe

⁶ This is also the Leopold (1949) argument which displaces anthropocentric approaches.

trends, and report and summarise patterns. However, Brunckhorst does not propose any particular model or technique for implementing these ideologies.

Sale (2000) defines bioregionalism as a movement where one must understand the place, the specific place where one lives—the types of soils and rocks under the feet, the source of waters we drink, the limits of the resources of the land, the carrying capacities of the land and water bodies, the places where it must not be stressed, the place where its bounties can be developed, the treasures it holds and the treasures it withholds. He claims, ‘Bioregionalism is defined by culture of the people, of the population native to the land and the human social and economic arrangements in both urban and rural settings’.

On the other hand, Jim Dodge (in Canizaro 2012) of Planet Drum Foundation, which promotes bioregionalism as a grassroots approach to ecology emphasising sustainability, community self-determination and regional self-reliance, declares that he is ‘not all sure what bioregionalism is, and understands bioregionalism as an idea that is still a loose and amorphous formulation and presently is more a hopeful declaration than actual practice’. This argument implies that while it is evident that trying to provide a quick definition for bioregionalism is in itself problematic (Russ 1995; Gary Coates, quoted in Canizaro 2012; Thayer 2020), given the many intangible features that are embodied in the understanding of bioregionalism, it is still a powerful idea that is aimed at realignment of governing boundaries according to ecological criteria rather than arbitrary political boundaries in order to achieve a sustainable future that is embedded in reconnecting communities to the place they live in. The United Nations Environment Programme (United Nations 2000) observes that ‘bioregional planning refers to land use planning and management that promotes sustainable development by recognizing the relationship between, and giving practical effect to, environmental integrity, human wellbeing and economic efficiency within a defined geographical space, the boundaries of which were determined in accordance with environmental and social criteria’.

Bioregional planning and management are sometimes identified as an approximation to environmental management, but this is inaccurate. Bioregional planning and management methodology has its objectives set in establishing the political and institutional frame in which government, community, cooperations, and other non-state and private interests feed the incentive to cooperate, keeping in mind the territory’s sustainable development (United Nations 2000).

Another unique description of a bioregion is provided by Thayer (2003) as a '*life-place*', that is, 'a unique region definable by natural (rather than political) boundaries with a geographic, climatic, hydrological, and ecological character capable of supporting unique human and nonhuman living communities'. The origin of 'life-place planning theory' also identifies Lewis Mumford, Patrick Geddes, Frederic Le Play, Ebenezer Howard, Benton MacKaye and Ian McHarg as important precursors.

Later, Whitaker (2005) explains that bioregionalism is about organising humans according to bioregions, and undoing the current organisation by political boundaries. He argues that social behaviour and political preferences are largely governed by the bioregion. He analyses the voting pattern of the regions and notes that people living on plains are largely conservative and those in ports, largely liberal. This implies that just as the climate or bioregion triggers a certain kind of activity and development, it modifies the behaviour of communities. Although this study was conducted to observe voting patterns, the relevant learning is the fact that every region/bioregion a community 'belongs' to is unique from each other, as unique as the land they occupy. The uniqueness ranges not only from voting preferences to behaviour patterns, but also from food habits to cultural frameworks. Whitaker's observations mainly apply to new nations of the USA and Australia. However, boundaries may still blur along the edges or be created within the state according to the watershed areas, topography and resources.

In the field of architecture and the built environment, bioregionalism is perceived as an ecological and sustainable-design movement that aims to 'create a place based sensibility that is informed by local knowledge of geography, climate, landscape, indigenous cultures and their environmental history' (Canizaro 2012; Weller and Bolleter 2013; Etherington 2021). Further, the ideologies of many scholars and architects who promote architecture and built forms that are immersed in local culture, using locally available materials and technology, promote bioregionalism, whether or not they use the term explicitly (Fanfani and Matarán Ruiz 2020; Etherington 2021).

Regionalism as a concept also denotes a combination of climate, myth, craft and culture, an 'anti-centrist consensus' (Frampton 1985). In this context, traditional knowledge is also considered to be an important feature of bioregionalism. In a slightly different context, Rahman (2000) demonstrates that exclusion of traditional knowledge from development activities has had disastrous consequences when outsider knowledge has

been imposed. In this thesis, the term ‘culture’ is used to denote not just the arts and crafts of the region, but the lifestyle preferences, especially the many ways in which communities interact with their immediate built/natural environment (Berkes and Folke 1992).

The work of Newman (2012) endorses the above concept and explains that cities that reflect a ‘sense of place’ protect their natural and cultural assets. The Ten Melbourne Principles for sustainable cities, chartered in 2002 and endorsed by the Johannesburg Earth Summit, is the foundation of Newman’s book. Of particular importance to this study is the sixth principle, which is based on the belief that ‘*cities that reflect a sense of place protect their natural and cultural assets*’. Accordingly, cities or districts or neighbourhoods, such as those in Willunga Basin (including Aldinga), that have strong cultural practices and celebrate their sense of place, develop connections with the bioregion and support more sustainable lifestyles.

Additionally, Timothy Beatley (2005) supports the theory of bioregionalism, claiming that reorganising our lives around bioregions will itself encourage commitment to the place: ‘If we begin to see ourselves as embedded in the Cuyahoga bioregion or the Mt. Shasta bioregion, we may further develop a strong sense of regional and place dimension to our language, thinking, lives and this will make it easier to live more sustainable, place-based lives’. Inculcating a sense of belonging; pride in the home; and loyalty to the home, which is primarily not just the building but the region in which that building resides, creates an inherent protective attitude to resources and strengthens the connections with ecosystem services, thus achieving sustainable/positive lifestyles (Taylor 2000; Birkeland 2008; Downton 2002; Church 2013; Berg 2009). Often, bioregional approaches to planning advocate pure ecological aspects and address only biodiversity issues, ignoring the human–environment relationship. Phillips (1995) critiques this approach and suggests that ecology must be linked with economics, sociology and politics to ensure good policy intentions. Bioregional boundaries are best identified within a watershed area; however, it does not have to be limited to this method, and the boundaries can be blurred.

Many scholars also advocate the inclusion of the ‘spirit of the place’ as seen by the local communities, particularly aboriginals and traditional custodians of the land, into bioregionalism, as well as any studies that are located within understanding the nature of a region, particularly within the realms of sustainability (McCann 2011; Vishwasrao

2010; Wuisang 2014; Massey 1993). This includes the spiritual significance that the region holds for the local communities, be it supernatural or a symbolic mythical meaning. No doubt, understanding the ‘spirit of the place’ would lead to ‘loyalty to the place’ and ‘ethics of the place’ (Taylor 2000; McCann 2011; Berg 2009, 2015, 1978; Thayer 2003; Sale 2000; Snyder 1995; Dodge 1981). While there is value in this notion, this research does not delve into this area of exploring spiritual connections of the place for two reasons. First, this research is focused on understanding the aspirations for the region that the local community exhibits, without distinguishing traditional owners and recent occupants (about 2–3 decades old) who exhibit a ‘sense of place’ irrespective of their ancestry. Second, while the research recognises the traditional Kaurna owners of the region and spiritual connections they would have with the region, the study relies on, and limits itself to, the study of development regulations, instruments of public participation and decision-making processes of six specific urban case studies. Hence, it will be assumed that the ‘spirit of place’ does not necessarily originate from centuries of existence but goes on to capture the essence of a chosen lifestyle and aspirations for local character.

To summarise, the idea of bioregionalism defies political boundaries and unifies communities according to bioregional areas—as is clearly seen in some examples in the Willunga Basin. Bioregional planning recognises the strong relationship between the built environment and the natural environment, although actual implementation is yet to be achieved, and that the responsibility of protecting, maintaining and enhancing the ecosystem as a whole rests on the people, and is best done when people feel connected with their land. Bioregional planning is a holistic approach towards preserving or developing a geographical region by tapping into local knowledge, recognising and inculcating a sense of place and sense of belonging, and thus embarking on a collaborative decision-making journey towards sustainable growth of the region that encompasses social wellbeing, environmental management and economic efficiency—the three aspects of sustainable development. Bioregional urbanism is best achieved when addressed at all levels of planning—international, national, state and neighbourhood, as well as at street levels—surpassing all types of political and governing boundaries.

4.2 Philosophical Position

The primary theory that frames this research is that of bioregionalism, the various models that guide bioregional thinking and practice, the built environment it shapes, and most importantly the bridge it helps build to counter the divide between urban and rural identities, especially at the fringe.

Political boundaries, especially urban boundaries, the ones meant for ease of governing, often do not prioritise or even consider natural boundaries and, thus, lose out on identifying opportunities to seek a balance between retaining the biodiversity of a region and accommodating the needs of human consumption. Urban boundaries also tend to focus on enabling human consumption. In general, attempts are made to include nature strips, tree covers and small water-based ecosystems—not so much with the intention of balancing the built environment with the natural, but more as a token to accommodate socio-cultural connections to nature. These challenges can be mitigated by adopting bioregional urbanism models, which is explored by a few authors such as Sarah Church (2013), Janis Birkeland (2008), Paul Downton (2002), Silvana Cappuccio (2009) and David Fanfani (2018).

Bioregional urbanism as an alternative framework for sustainable urban development is a new model introduced by Sarah Church (2015), which intends to introduce elements of bioregionalism into existing cities for incremental change.

Bioregionalism resonates with the post-political theory that claims formal state-created processes diminish the space for public participation and offer no room for contestation over matters that affect local communities (Legacy et al. 2018). However, as discussed in the previous chapter, public participation can only be efficient when all stakeholders are equally engaged and educated on all matters regarding sustainable urban development goals and visions for development of the region (Hatley 2013; Chado, Johar and Zayyanu 2016; Innes 1995). This is possible when local communities exhibit a ‘sense of belonging’ and have ‘intangible local knowledge’ that planning authorities can build on (Etherington 2021; T. Berman 2017; Magnaghi 2005; Peters, Stodolska and Horolets 2016; Farkisch, Ahmadi and Che-Ani 2015; Tweed and Sutherland 2007).

Bioregionalism itself derives heavily from the theory that settlement character has always been place specific, climate responsive and guided by very specific codes (which are seen as implicit by current societies), and showcases very clear social and cultural values. Building and development codes, rules and regulations were implicit and came from the community's social and cultural practices. Technologies and building forms of designs were influenced and depended heavily on local climate, geography and resources. So, in that sense, they were bioregionally appropriate—speaking the language of the culture, codified by social norms, and structured by the natural setting in which they existed. However, globalisation, and easy exchange of goods and ideas, however heavy or fragile, has now produced a cookie-cutter, one-size-fits-all environment, which challenges the sense of belonging and sense of place and local identities. Place identities and sense of belonging are further threatened by rapid urbanisation at the fringe, which transforms the bioregion that was defined by certain cultural ways of life into a generalist urban precinct, thereby losing its unique local identity. However, by adopting a bioregionalist strategy that bridges the urban–rural divide by ‘a shared system of human values, where local stakeholders take on an active role’ (Thayer 2020) in the direction of development and caretaking of the region, it might still be possible to achieve sustainability goals for a better future.

Emerging from the eco-centric environmental activism, bioregionalism contends that sustainable development cannot be achieved by technical and administrative measures alone and needs to incorporate *reappraisal of attitudes, lifestyles and social structures* (Atkinson 1992; Church 2013; Downton 2002; Birkeland 2008). By bringing back these factors into consideration, especially in today's rapidly urbanising societies, this research examines development patterns at the fringe, through the lens of bioregionalism, and critiques current planning policies, codes and regulations in shaping the city—at the edges. In looking at the fringe, the study considers Aldinga and Willunga in South Australia and investigates what happens at the interface of these rural–urban boundaries, how architecture and societies transform, and the struggle of regulatory frameworks to safeguard cultural landscapes while accommodating urban growth.

4.3 Bioregionalism: Place-Based Activism

The final boundaries of a bioregion are best described by the people who have lived within it, through human recognition of the realities of living-in-place.

(Peter Berg and Raymond Dasmann 1977, quoted in Glotfelty and Quesnel, *The Biosphere and the Bioregion: Essential Writings of Peter Berg*, 2014, p. 36)

The term bioregionalism and the process of identifying the boundaries of a bioregion were first conceived by Allen Van Newkirk and Peter Berg in 1971, defining bioregions as *biogeographically interpreted culture areas* (McGinnis 1996; Thayer 2003; Sale 2000). Peter Berg calls bioregionalism a cultural idea that questions personal identity located within a place—‘who am I, what am I and what am I going to do about it’—suggesting that people look at the place where they live and find a way to ‘fit’ into its natural characteristics (Berg 2001); with emphasis on action.

The most popularly accepted form of defining a bioregion is that of following the natural boundaries of a watershed—‘hydrological’ terrain. However, Berg and Raymond (1977) suggest that a bioregion is best determined initially by climatology, physiography, animal and plant geography, natural history, and other natural sciences—geographical terrain—and then overlaying that region with a terrain of consciousness that is more primitive and connected to the place. By their very nature, political boundaries and geographical boundaries in most contexts do not necessarily map on to each other. Human attachments and spiritual connections to place adds further complexity. For the sake of simplicity and efficiency in conducting the study, this research limits itself to the geographical boundaries of Willunga Basin as defined by the watershed. Interestingly, initial survey and political boundaries of the region in the mid/late 1800s (Hundred of Willunga) also followed these natural boundaries, as seen in Chapter 5.

Peter and Dasmann further the notion of bioregionalism through living-in-place⁷ and re-inhabiting a region. Although this idea was put forward almost half a century ago, it is still viable as we continue to exploit our natural resources for short-term benefits. According to them, a society that practises ‘living-in-place’ keeps a balance with its region of support and re-inhabitation means learning to ‘live-in-place’ in an area that been

⁷ This should not be confused with ‘aging in place’, which is a more recent concept for improving the quality of life for senior citizens by finding ways to help them live in their own home.

disrupted and injured through past exploitation (McGinnis 1996; Thayer 2003; Sale 2000; Aberley 1999). Many new land use policies are now in place to protect and preserve important ecosystems and cultural landscapes, such as character preservation boundaries and defining environment and food production areas, but they are yet to evolve in guiding the way human habitation can connect to their region within these boundaries.

Developed on the ideas of designing built environments within the capabilities of the immediate natural environment (McHarg 1992) and incorporating green spaces around urban boundaries (Howard 1902; C. Alexander 1975), bioregionalism puts its faith on ‘life-place’ ways of thinking, concluding that ‘*role of place and region is vital to the politics and culture of a democratic community*’ (Thayer 2003; Sale 2000). This is based on the belief that loyalty to place leads to ‘a sense of pride in residency, high degree of participation by citizens in local affairs of all types, a desire to preserve natural assets, willingness to support local businesses and understanding that “price” is not the same as “cost”, a sense of civic responsibility, overall understanding of sustainability concepts and commitment to practice a productive life with long term goals’ (Taylor 2000; Thayer 2003; Sale 2000).

‘Territorialist’ (Magnaghi 2005), ‘territorial intelligence’ (INTI 2009) and ‘land ethics’ (Leopold 1949, 2014) are other schools of thought that echo the same ideologies as bioregionalism and ‘place consciousness’—identifying a (bio)region/territory with both place and local people to include not only local landscape, environment and urban features, but also local knowledge, culture and crafts as a holistic living entity (Magnaghi 2005). Although territorialism focuses more on heritage and elaborates on the concept of local self-sustainable development, it is not clear how the same could be achieved gracefully.

However, when small towns at the fringe of large metropolitan regions begin to urbanise and rural ways of life are challenged by suburban characteristics, agrarian communities that foster a strong ‘sense of place’ and practise ‘living-in-place’ start to change not only the physical nature of the landscape but also the underlying socio-cultural fabric (Salamon 2003; Dastbaz, Naudé and Manoochehri 2018; Baker, Coffee and Hugo 2001), leading to possible conflicts and disputes. This then becomes the battleground for place-based activism; communities are divided, with old timers fighting for their familiar ways of life and to retain the aesthetics of their cultural landscapes and local character, and newcomers

aspiring for a suburban way of life with all the infrastructure, usually failing to engage with the region in any productive way. To better understand this conflict and the ways in which it acts out in Willunga Basin, and how development policies and regulations manage these conflicts, is a key objective of this thesis.

4.4 Social Sustainability: The Problem of Defining and Measuring

[The] process for creating sustainable, successful places that promote wellbeing, by understanding what people need from the places [where] they live and work. Social sustainability combines the design of the physical realm with design of the social world – infrastructure to support social and cultural life, social amenities, systems for citizen engagement and space for people and places to evolve.

(Woodcraft, Bacon, and Caistor-Arendar, *Design for Social Sustainability*, 2011, p.11)

Social sustainability is an emerging field in the built environment professions, requiring an integrated approach from social scientists, architects, planners and other professionals. Urban planning until now has focused mainly on the ‘where’ of location and ‘how much’ of volume (Hallsworth 1978); it is now time to include ‘how’ we experience social values (Palich and Edmonds 2013; Edmonds 2013).

While the other two pillars of sustainable development—environmental sustainability and economic sustainability—receive significant attention, social sustainability is rarely considered, defined or researched (PIA 2017), quite possibly because of the difficulty in defining and measuring it (Kavanagh 2011). Current ways of measuring social sustainability are through demographics, such as population growth, average income and health statistics. However, the intangible value system that most societies exhibit is problematic to define and measure, especially in the area of urban development policies and practice. Yet, it is the central aspect of planning, where most planning policies and documents use phrases such as ‘quality of life’, ‘sense of belonging’ and ‘neighbourliness’—all related to social sustainability.

Some institutes have attempted to develop principles of social sustainability, such as equity, diversity, interconnectedness, quality of life and wellbeing, democracy, and governance (Healey 1997, Brown and Gauntlett 2012). The theory of bioregionalism in itself implies ‘increased procedural justice’ in planning and design, by shifting the power

to a more local level and adopting ‘wide and open’ participation in the decision-making processes, particularly around urban development (Fanfani and Matarán Ruiz 2020).

Social impact assessment (SIA) refers to the consequences of a proposed decision or action on a community—on their way of life, life chances, health, culture and capacity to sustain these. PIA highly recommends that any proposal that requires economic or environmental assessment should also require SIA and should be a public document (PIA 2017). The goal of SIA is to develop a more ecologically, socio-culturally and economically sustainable environment (Vanclay 2003). International guidelines developed by IAIA suggest the following aspects for assessing social impact: people’s way of life, their culture, their community, their political systems, their environment, their health and wellbeing, their personal and property rights, and their fears and aspirations. Therefore, when a development is proposed, it is expected that changes to any of the above will be assessed as part of the SIA criteria. However, demographic profiling and community consultation have been substituted for social science research, and the impact statements are generally based on speculation rather than assessment.

According to the NSW Department of Planning and Environment, the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* legislates that social impacts are part of the overall environmental impact assessment, but there is no guidance on how to conduct this assessment. Hence, the department has now developed its own SIA guidelines for state significant projects such as mining (Department of Planning and Environment, NSW 2017). These guidelines are meant mainly for large projects, such as mining, petroleum extraction or other extractive industry development. PIA proposes that SIA be performed for large developments (e.g. major retail; sports or social infrastructure facilities; significant change of land use, including highways and agricultural land; sale or rezoning of public land; amendments to planning policies and plans; and controversial uses). This in itself poses an issue that there is no clear list of what type of proposals require SIA, in addition to disregarding medium-scale proposals, which may still have a significant impact on social sustainability.

This part of the literature on SIA is discussed to clarify its importance and how it fits into the larger picture of bioregionalism. While SIA has a clear mandate, and PIA puts forth a recommendation, there seems to be no means to ensure that this is practised at the lowest

applicable development plan, and this creates a void in the larger picture of achieving social sustainability.

4.5 Local Knowledge for Urban Planning: A Bioregional Directive

The primary directive of bioregionalism aligns with Lefebvre's (1991) statement that any space occupied by human communities is not only a static measurable physical entity but also a socio-cultural entity. This socio-cultural entity embodies unique local knowledge that is neither measurable nor static but is produced and shared by people engaged with each other in their everyday life practices.

'Wisdom of place' is a term being used by scholars to explain Western regional identity—how the place where people live defines not only their daily life but also governmental aspects (Ashley and Alm 2016). It is influenced by how people view their region (bioregion) and how policies affect their lives, thus giving birth to the notion of 'regionalism' or place identity, and in this case identifies with the concept of 'bioregionalism'. Ashley and Alm (2016) explored the perceptions of urban planners to study the importance of 'place' in relation to urban development policies by comparing two towns in the North American West region (bioregion?), spread across Canada and the USA with different national agendas. Their research concluded that 'place' definitely mattered and regional culture (special and innate characteristics) hugely influenced urban development policies (practical and applied) for those towns. They further emphasised that geographical location as well as historical and cultural heritage should be taken into account when formulating urban development policies, particularly in unique regions (bioregions).

While it is clear that local knowledge is necessary to improve planning policies (Sale 2000; Ashley and Alm 2016; Atkinson 1992) and development projects, there is no clear mandate on documenting types/essence of local knowledge that can be used in the decision-making process of planning and development (T. Berman 2017). Local knowledge is generally referred to as the locals' desires and needs (T. Berman 2017; Innes and Booher 2004; Lindblom 1979); cultural values and social customs (Corburn 2003; Greetz 1983); daily problems and environmental nuisances (Fenster and Yacobi 2005); complaints against abandoned structures, noise, filth and odour; and perceptions, opinions, ideas, beliefs, speculations, feelings and sensations (T. Berman 2017). 'Local

knowledge contains elements whereby locals perceive, measure and evaluate their environment; solve problems; and ascertain new information, including processes whereby (local?) knowledge is produced, stored, used and transmitted' (Food and Agriculture Organization 2004). Thus, there is a need for local knowledge to be categorised, layered and documented, in a way that it can be valued and can further inform planning policies and development projects so that built environments can be created/improved in a way that suits/improves the quality of life of its users.

Local knowledge can be a very important and fundamental resource for implementing social justice and sustainable planning (Corburn 2003), especially about knowing the land in which we live, making sense of the various components of the region, and having a close relationship with the land and community (Sale 2000). It has been established by many scholars that it is beneficial to individual and social wellbeing if there are enough areas along the streets of towns and neighbourhoods where people can linger, comfortably, for hours at a time (C. Alexander 1977; Kelly et al. 2012; Gehl 1980; Mehta 2006; Jacobs 1992). With interaction among neighbours and 'dwellers' of the region comes sharing of local knowledge, improving neighbourliness.

4.6 Bioregional Urbanism as an Urban Development Paradigm

There are a few bioregional urbanism models proposed by various scholars, who suggest bioregionalism as a new urban development paradigm. Some of them are discussed below.

Sarah Church's (2013) 'Urban Bioregionalism' is a model that proposes incremental change intended to introduce the principles of bioregionalism into existing cities. The model integrates the democratic process, public discourse and physical environment of the city, as well as municipal policies, neighbourhood-oriented stewardship and individual actions, which influence incremental change towards bioregional urbanism. The intention of the model is to foster bioregional ideals such as sense of place, ecological awareness and active participation of individuals, thereby transforming the relationship between humans and their immediate natural environment. This is based on the premise that urban dwellers are disconnected from the environment and natural processes, contributing to attitudes that lead to overconsumption and degradation of very valuable natural resources. The model is intended to be adopted by planners and policymakers

when making amendments to development plans, policies and regulations. Bioregional urbanism is directly placed within the context of place-based urban planning and design paradigms.

Birkeland's (2003, 2008, 2012) 'SmartMode' process to achieve net positive development is based on bioregional philosophies, advocating processes that include engaging with local people, making inventories of habitats and cultural practices, and developing decision-making structures that are responsive to the region's unique cultural and biophysical characters. The basic steps of the process are as follows: establish common ground on sustainability concepts; adopt a constitution for decision-making; articulate project objectives and criteria; conduct forensic audits for new information; consider 'how and what' to trace and measure; select appropriate methods and tools; develop planning information, concepts and strategies; develop design strategies; apply self-assessment; apply external assessment; ensure relevant measurements; and assess accountability and performance. The SmartMode approach is more of a checklist than a prescribed standalone process as Birkeland recognises that planning, design and decision systems should be tailored to the specific nature, context and issues at hand, and each step should be used as a reference point, not necessarily in the same order. This process is very useful in bypassing institutional barriers and can very easily be applied to community groups and public-private partnerships and as a completely new planning sphere. However, with no means to enforce the actions, this process remains a guideline only and possibly would only work best when the group that uses it is well informed, respectful and harmonious in its discussions.

Paul Downton (2002) proposes that 'Sustainable Human Ecological Development (SHED)' is the next step in the evolution of urban environments, built to fit in place, in peace with nature, supporting an equitable society in an 'Ecopolis'—a utopian city. The SHED propositions are as follows: determining the ecological parameters for the city region; generating an integrated knowledge of planning, architectural design and cultural components with that of the bioregion; requiring a conscious and systematic cultural change with communicative decision-making structures; and providing a means to catalyse cultural change through participation and engagement of the human community within the urban ecosystem. The Ecopolis Development Principles, designed to develop healthy communities that restore rather than destroy ecosystems, seeks to minimise

ecological footprints and maximise human potential. It proposes to minimise ecological footprints by restoring degraded land, to fit the bioregion, to achieve balanced development that fits the bioregion, to create compact cities, and to optimise energy and resource use. According to this principle, human potential can be maximised by contributing to the economy, providing health and security, encouraging community character, promoting social justice and equity, and enriching history and culture. The Ecopolis model is quite complex, with 27 components of process, principles and performance criteria; however, it has already been practised by Ecopolis Architects and is proven to be a successful model as seen in the award winning project - Christie's Walk in Adelaide.

In a new urban planning approach called the Transect, Andres Duany and Emily Talen (2002a) promote the 'SmartCode' model, a regulatory code which links urbanism and environmentalism to achieve sustainability and is significantly different from a conventional zoning code. This model encourages environmentalists to assess human habitats and opposes current systems of single-use zones, which they claim separate human habitats from natural environment. SmartCode is a transect-based code with three main components: Requirements, Organisation and Procedures. As a requirement, SmartCode must be comprehensive, simple and technically worded, particularly emphasising technicality, without the vocabulary of which, the code would fail. SmartCode is structured for environments to be coded at different scales and ranges, where the rules are proscribed for different types of communities. The procedure to implement SmartCode shifts away from conventional zoning regulations, which separate the elements; instead, SmartCode integrates these elements and serves as a guiding framework. SmartCode is ambitious in its framework, hoping to produce viable urban settings that people will want to live in and at the same time reversing the need to convert more land to low-density sprawl, providing a *non-hostile integration between natural and human ecologies* (Duany and Talen 2002a, 2002b). However, as noted earlier in Chapter Two Section 2.1.4, SmartCode is problematic and can be as rigid as zoning controls depending upon residents' affinities with the code designer's aesthetic norms, forms and patterns.

Adrian Atkinson's model of 'Eco-centric Regional Development' using the urban bioregion as a sustainable development paradigm states that the contending

environmental crisis cannot be solved by technical and administrative measures alone, but requires reappraisal of attitudes, lifestyles and social structures (Atkinson 1992). The eco-centric model asserts that post-industrialisation and post-colonisation practices have changed the urban hinterland, where the relationship between cities and the hinterland has expanded far beyond its immediate regions, and ecological footprints are spread across the globe. This model proposes basic principles on which bioregions should be built: bioregions are geophysical and ecologically coherent areas; bioregions are also culturally coherent entities; measurement of wealth in a bioregion is its carrying capacity; and a bioregional economy is self-reliant. However, this paradigm also has its challenges: water resources must be managed comprehensively, within the watersheds; energy planning has to be regional, with alternative strategies; and calls for food self-sufficiency and efficient land use management strategies operating as an integral part of the social system, changing the theory and politics of land following the resource management principles developed by new economists. In summary, this model suggests that bioregionalism is an ecological and cultural symbiosis, with urban and rural functions complementing one another as discrete self-reliant entities. Most importantly, this model strongly advocates a cooperative and participative approach to land use.

The Planet Drum Foundation (1973) promotes bioregionalism as a grassroots approach to find sustainable ways to live within the natural confines of bioregions by educating the community, with the belief that people who know and care about the places where they live will work to maintain and restore them. This ideology emphasises sustainability, community self-determination and regional self-reliance. Key characteristics of 'Bioregional Management' are as follows: embracing regions large enough to accommodate human habitats and viable ecosystem functions; leadership and management that comes from public and community residents as well as resource users; economic sustainability; full involvement of all stakeholders; social acceptance; comprehensive information dissemination; research and monitoring; use of local knowledge; adaptive management; restoration; cooperative skills development; and institutional integration and political cooperation of the region's cross political boundaries (Etherington 2021; Miller and Johnson 1995).

In summary, the most imperative outcome of applying a bioregional framework in urban planning is that auditing and planning is done at a bioregional scale, irrespective of

political boundaries (Birkeland 2008), reconnecting urban dwellers with their bioregion (Church 2013), which in turn catalyses a cultural change towards adopting sustainable lifestyles (Downton 2002). Currently, data is collected as per political jurisdictions and not as per bioregions, and policies tend to be framed for action within those political jurisdictions, ignoring the impact on the larger bioregions. Adapting a bioregional urbanism model will overcome the fallacies of working within small areas, which could have significant impact on much larger regions. Most importantly, bioregional urbanism incorporates other forms of sustainability aspects, such as ecological urbanism, sustainable urbanism, social sustainability, ecological sustainability and even economic sustainability to provide a holistic approach to urbanisation issues, especially at the rural–urban fringe.

4.7 Bioregionalism in Australia

The term bioregionalism sits rather awkwardly in Australian usage ... expressed in quasi-mystical terms, it promotes local control, self-reliance, appropriate technology and sustainable living ... with the notion that drainage basins provide spatial units for integrated resource planning and management as well as for regional government.

(Murray McCaskill, *Book Review: The Emergence of Bioregionalism in the Murray-Darling Basin*, 1996, p. 63)

During the early 1990s, in the effort to study the problems of salinity in the Murray Darling Basin of south-eastern Australia, the term bioregionalism was embraced in the same light as most of the literature discussed previously. It was recognised that much of the problems in the basin were due to the misalignment of jurisdictional and biophysical boundaries (Powell 1993). The study traces the history and many warnings by early pioneers and surveyors maintaining a balance between built environments and the ecosystems. In doing so, the author discusses citizenship, community involvement, conservationism, planning and regionalism in the same context as this research. However, the focus and meaning of bioregionalism has shifted away from urbanism and focused more on biodiversity conservation, although the guiding principles remain the same.

In theory, bioregionalism is a highly valued paradigm for sustainable urban development; however, in current practice, bioregionalism mainly influences how catchment areas are managed in the new worlds of Australia, Canada and the USA, and the term bioregions

is now part of the standard vocabulary of environmental managers (Birkeland 2012). The bioregional planning conference held in Australia in 1995 generated a lot of discussion on *value shift from the sectoral nature of institutions* to address sustainable development in an *integrated and holistic manner* (Breckwoldt 1995). The sectoral nature is where environmentalists deal with environmental issues, economists are concerned only with economic issues, and similarly social issues are dealt with by social scientists. However, despite the conference echoing the ideas of bioregionalism in the same voice as that of previous literature, in practice, Australia identifies its bioregions as per the model developed by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

The WWF defines a bioregion as an ecologically and geographically defined area within a larger ‘ecozone’, which contains within it an ‘ecoregion’ or ecosystem. The terms ‘bioregion’ and biogeographic region’ are also used interchangeably. This is very different from the literature that this research is grounded on. This thesis prefers to use the term ‘bioregion’ in the urban socio-cultural context, as established by Berg, Sale, Birkeland, Downton, Church and others.

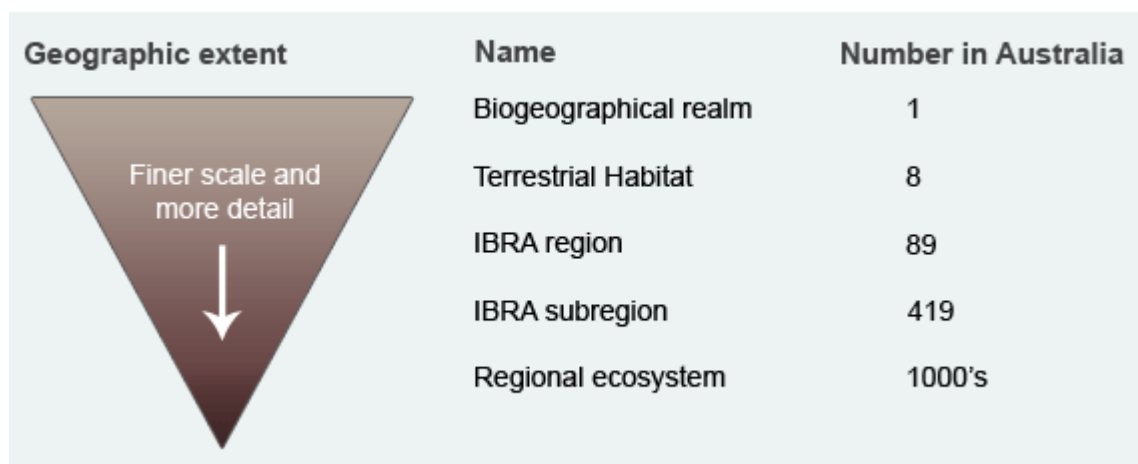


Figure 4.1: Conceptual model of the bioregional framework
 (<https://www.environment.gov.au/land/nrs/science/ibra/australias-bioregion-framework>)

The Australian land mass is divided into eight ecoregions, 89 bioregions and 419 subregions, with each region made up of a group of repetitive interacting ecosystems across the landscape (Department of Environment and Energy n.d.). Australia identifies bioregions as large geographically distinct areas with common characteristics such as climate, ecological features, and flora and fauna communities. Within and across the boundaries of bioregions sit the National Reserve System (NRS) protected areas. The

NRS is focused on long-term protection of biodiversity and has developed a strategy for 2009–2030.

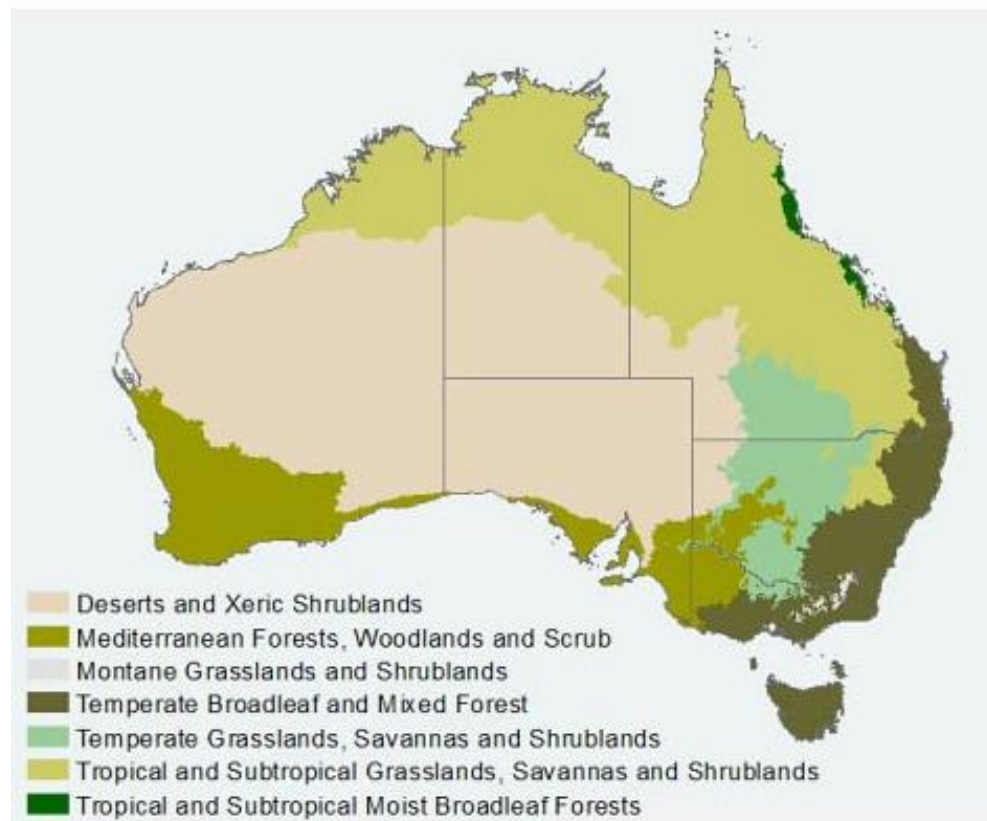


Figure 4.2: Map of Australia showing eight ecoregions
(<https://www.environment.gov.au/land/nrs/science/ibra/australias-ecoregions>)

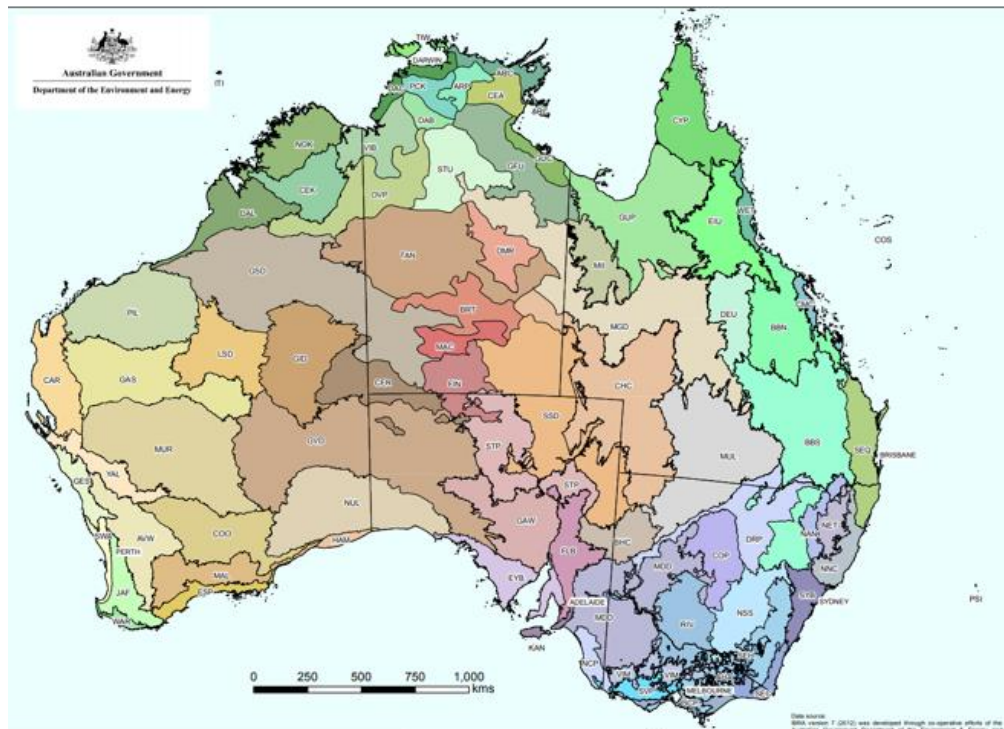
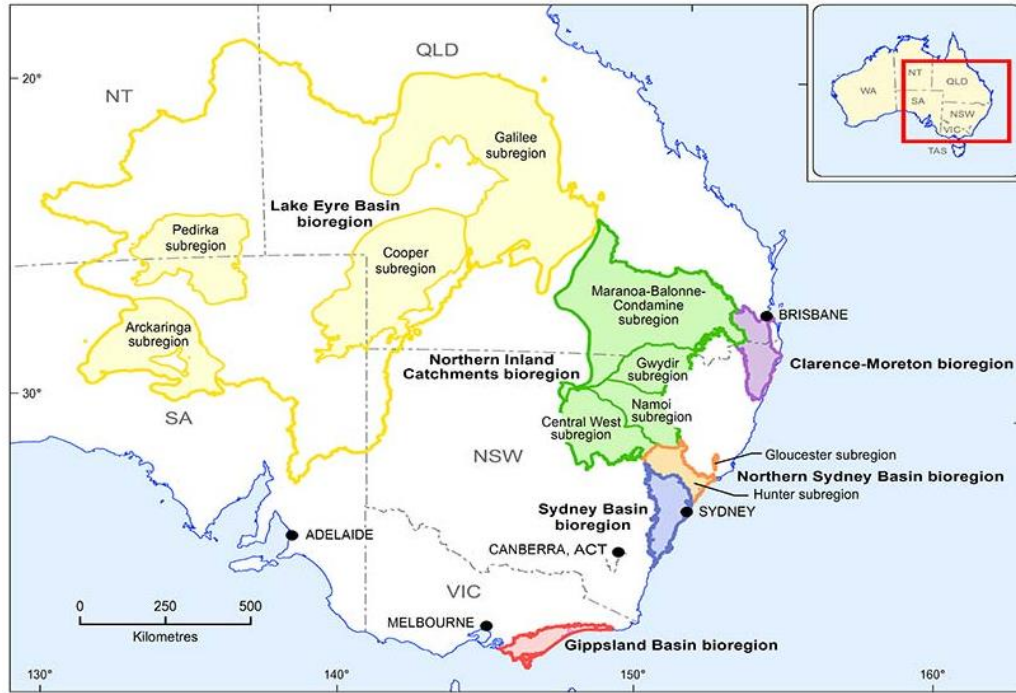


Figure 4.3: Bioregional Map of Australia showing 89 bioregions
 (<https://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/pages/5b3d2d31-2355-4b60-820c-e370572b2520/files/bioregions-new.pdf>)

Much work is underway in the field of biospheres, especially the ones that are UNESCO listed and NRS protected areas; however, this falls outside the context of this research. This research is more concerned with urbanisation at the rural–urban fringe and the immediate identifiable bioregion.

Another wing of the Australian Government, the Department of Geoscience, also uses the term bioregion and has prepared a map identifying six bioregions, which again is different to the academic literature discussed in the above sections. A bioregional assessment program has been set up to assess these areas, limiting itself to understanding the potential impacts of large-scale coal seam gas and coal mining developments on water resources and water-dependent assets, which, although very valuable, is not relevant to the context of this research.



The six bioregions in the Bioregional Assessment Programme, and their corresponding subregions

Figure 4.4: Bioregions in Australia as identified by the Department of Geoscience
 (<https://www.ga.gov.au/about/projects/water/bioregional-assessment-program>)

This research will focus on urbanisation trends, especially at the rural–urban fringe, and shall explore the bioregional urbanism theories in the context of Willunga Basin. With Australia being a highly urbanised country, and Australian urban centres being located in rich biodiversity pockets with agrarian hinterlands, there is constant conflict and competition between urbanisation and rural landscapes. Australian urban development trends have been that of sprawl. However, recently, Australia seems to have taken up a bioregionalist stand (without actually naming it), taking measures and setting up policies to protect its hinterland by land use controls at the fringe—especially as seen in South Australia (e.g. urban growth boundary, Hills Face Zone, character preservation district and *Environmental and Food Protection Act*).

Part Two of the thesis will explain design of the research, context of the research—Willunga Basin in South Australia, and ways in which the philosophy of bioregionalism guides this research, with the intention to locate contemporary meanings and applications of bioregionalism within the framework of urbanisation of the rural–urban fringe; particularly around the role of local community in shaping the identity of Willunga, by archival investigation of community participation practices and conducting semi-structured interviews with local residents.

Part Two

Research Design: Study of Willunga Basin

The City of Adelaide was located on the plains at the base of the (Mount Lofty) ranges precisely because of the proximity of a well-watered site, to land adjudged appropriate for farming. With the growth of the city and the spread of its suburbs across the plains and into the surrounding hills and valleys, a significant amount of this highly productive agricultural land has already been lost... the market should not dictate planning and zoning regulations (and thus land use), on the basis that land on the fringes of a growing city will always achieve a higher price for housing development over agriculture. As population increases, the short-term profit imperative of landholders will thus always result in the transition of farmland to suburbia around the urban fringe. This is seen by many in McLaren Vale (Willunga Basin) as a great loss, as agricultural land is thought of as crucially important both for its importance to local economies and 'ways of life' but also, ultimately, to South Australia and the City of Adelaide itself.

(William Skinner, *Fermenting Place*, 2015)

Losing precious food production land to suburbia is not a unique phenomenon to the Adelaide metropolitan area. It is a global problem in both developing and developed nations as a result of rapid urbanisation trends.

This research explores the notion of bioregional urbanism as a means to guide future urbanisation of the fringe to achieve holistic sustainable growth. The study focuses on Willunga Basin at the fringe of Adelaide, capital of the state of South Australia, Australia. Willunga Basin is perceived to be a region that has been successful in safeguarding their local agrarian landscape despite the population growth. Urban growth has been clearly demarcated in the *Character Preservation Act 2011*. A boundary line has been drawn along the Main South Road, to the east of which is land governed by the Act which discourages 'inappropriate urban development' (Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure, 2017), and to the west of which is land marked for urban growth. Based on their engagement in the recent UNESCO bid for World Heritage Site recognition (Marshall and Lennon, 2019) and other newspaper articles (ABC News 2011; Advertiser, 2003a, 2003b, 2004a, 2004b, 2005, 2006), this research hypothesises that residents of the Willunga Basin are connected to their natural environment, have sound knowledge of their local ecology, engage themselves in grassroots movements, and actively participate in the urban development policies and practices. This research explores the role of the local community in guiding the nature of development on either side of the boundary line

identified in the *Character Preservation Act 2011* and all the activities that shape the perceived practice of bioregional urbanism in the region.

The following chapters describe in detail the exact nature of the research, by placing the context of this research in the case of Willunga Basin (Chapter 5); discussing in detail the case-specific research questions, methodology, and specific strategies and tactics (Chapter 6).

Chapter 5: The Case of Willunga Basin

Chilled out, gorgeous scenery, affordable, and a sense of community—the Fleurieu Peninsula’s mix of country and coastal appeal is making it a popular base for successful people prepared to commute to work anywhere in the world.

(Penny Debelle, *Advertiser*, 23 September 2016)

According to this newspaper article, Willunga Basin has been attracting celebrities from within the country and also across the globe to make it their home. A similar sentiment can be identified a century earlier: ‘With its picturesque surroundings and peaceful atmosphere, Willunga offers to the artist, the holiday maker, and the lover of Nature, ideal conditions for a quiet and invigorating vacation’ (*The Register*, 18 August 1927)⁸.

Willa unga, meaning ‘the place of green trees’ in the local Kaurna language, is located to the south of Adelaide, South Australia, in a very attractive setting, between the hills and the coast. This region has received much praise and admiration since it was first discovered and surveyed in 1837. Willunga, the ‘place of green trees’, has been endorsed by many publications, which echo the sentiments and pride of the people who call this region their home. Even now, Willunga Basin is a scenic region, with its agricultural landscape, close to the shores and located at the edge of the Adelaide metropolitan area, making it an ideal location for people who value living in an aesthetically pleasing natural environment, yet close enough to commute to Adelaide CBD easily. The local council as well as some interested local groups in the metropolitan area are keen on applying for and

⁸ *The Register* started in 1836 and became the *South Australian Register* in 1839. Many sources use the title interchangeably. For the sake of consistency, in this thesis, *The Register* will be used for referencing materials from any date.

obtaining national/UNESCO heritage recognition for the whole region, including the Barossa Valley.

Historically, early settlers chose to settle in this location for its agricultural value and the stone quarries. In 1962, Stuart Hart, town planner, marked this region as aesthetically valuable and drew up boundaries to discourage urbanisation. These boundaries are constantly in conflict, and local communities seem to prefer to retain their quasi-rural lifestyles and resist urbanisation despite many new developments in the recent years.

The conflicts, development projects/attempts, local community voices, and the democratic process that enables or challenges these developments are explored by looking in detail at these projects—their initial development applications, assessment meetings, backlash from the community (e.g., newspaper reports and objection letters), revised designs/applications, approvals, and interviews with professionals involved in the projects. In consideration of the definition of bioregionalism (as explained in Chapter 4) as a holistic attitude towards the local natural environment and local community socio-cultural values, the development policies and projects, and the conflicts triggered, represent the bioregional attitudes of the region. Hence, examining the process of public participation and community engagement related to urban development projects from both top-down and bottom-up approaches provides a good understanding of how bioregionalism is being practised in Willunga Basin.

Willunga Basin is located in the southern part of metropolitan Adelaide, bound by very distinctive natural features—hills to the east and south, sea to the west, and Onkaparinga River to the north. The Protection Bill of 2010 defines the boundaries of the basin in the following words: ‘The basin’s perimeter follows the coastline from just above the mouth of the Onkaparinga River at Port Noarlunga down to Sellicks, then up the hill’s face to the ridge of the hills, along the picturesque hill’s ridge line, across the Onkaparinga River valley to the top of the Onkaparinga River Recreation Reserve. It then takes in the northern boundary, which forms the northern perimeter of the basin in order to encapsulate the entire catchment area of the Onkaparinga River estuary system’.

5.1 Geographical and Geological Significance

As seen in Chapter 4, Bioregionalism, Australia has been divided into 89 bioregions and 419 subregions. Willunga Basin falls within the ‘Mediterranean Forests, Woodlands and Scrub’ ecoregion located in the southern part of the country (see Figure 5.1). It is characterised by hot and dry summers, with cool and wet winters. There are only five such regions in the world: south-central and south-western Australia, the fynbos of Southern Africa, the Chilean Matorral, and the Mediterranean ecoregions of California. These ecoregions exhibit rare habitats and rich biodiversity, representing over 10% of plant species collectively. Plants and animals in these ecoregions are uniquely adapted for the stressful conditions of long hot summers with little rain. Most plants are adapted for fire and, in fact, dependent on it for persistence (Department of Environment and Energy 2012; WWF n.d.). Temperate climate and relatively productive soil has resulted in clearing for human food production, thus reducing native vegetation, flora and fauna. As noted in the WWF’s classification of the earth’s regions, these regions’ biodiversity is ‘threatened by fragmentation, alien species and alterations in fire regimes’ (WWF n.d.).

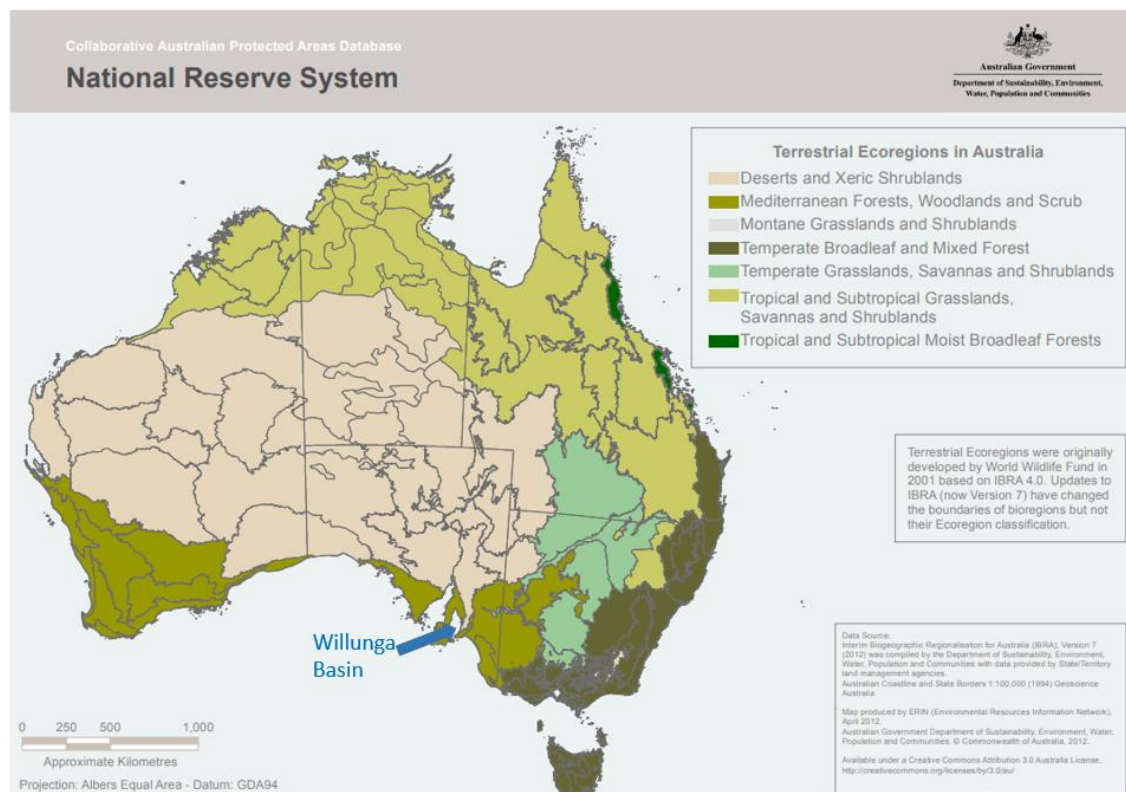


Figure 5.1: Locating Willunga Basin within the Australian ecoregions
(https://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/pages/1716eb1c-939c-49a0-9c0e-8f412f04e410/files/ecoregions_1.pdf)

Geologically, Willunga Basin sits within the upland system created by the Mount Lofty and Flinders Ranges, which together extend to about 800 km inland from the southern coast near Adelaide (Hillis and Müller 2003). As can be seen in Figures 5.2–5.4, the ranges are bound by low regions with elevations at almost sea level. Mount Lofty Ranges are bound by curvilinear scarps, which geologist M. Sandiford, in Hillis and Miller (2003), states are the ‘most dramatic fault-bound landscapes anywhere in the Australian continent’. Willunga Basin itself is bound by one of these dramatic western scarps on the east and the sea on the west. The geologist goes on to say that the Willunga scarp is ‘exposed in a spectacular profile at Sellicks Beach’.

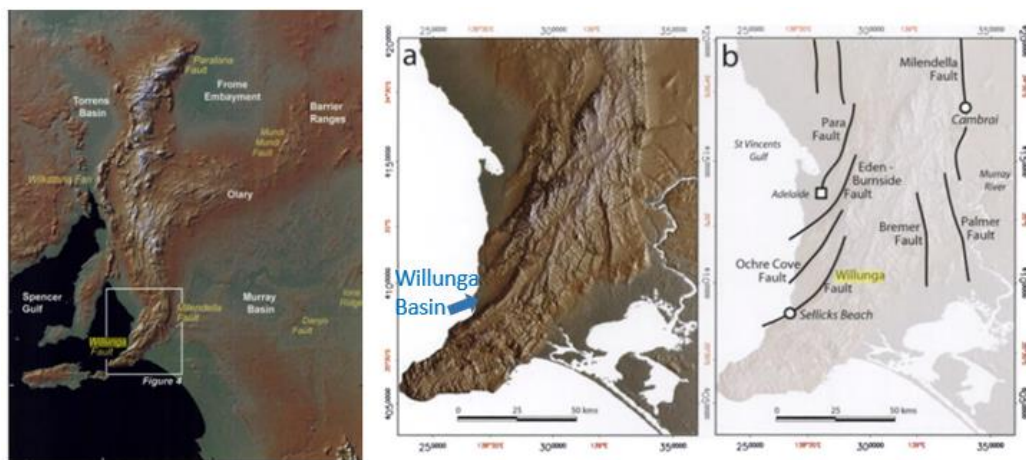


Figure 5.2: Locating Willunga in the geographical context
(Source: Hillis and Miller 2013, p110)

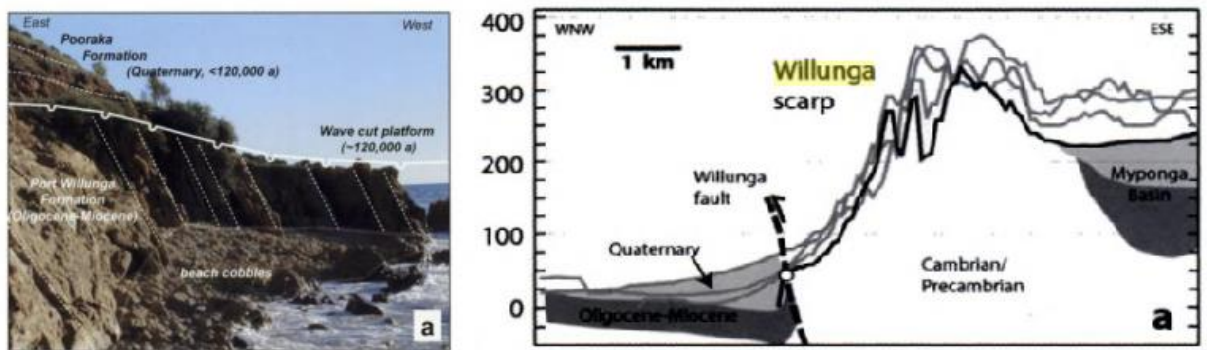


Figure 5.3: Port Willunga formation and topographic profile of Willunga scarp
(Source: Hillis and Miller 2013, p113)

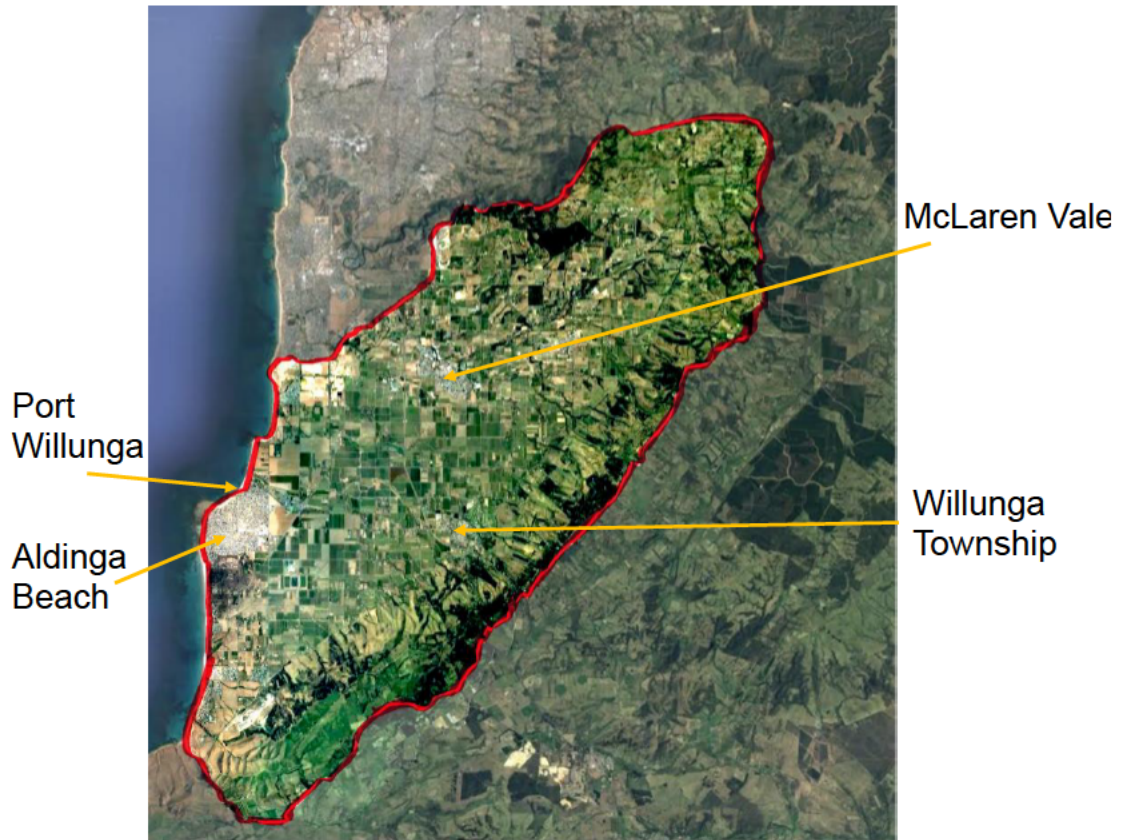


Figure 5.4: Willunga Basin highlighted
(Google Maps)

Geologically significant, and geographically well situated at the edge of metropolitan Adelaide, Willunga presents itself as a perfect setting to study the urbanisation trends at the fringe, and observe the rural–urban conflicts and the role of the local community in shaping its socio-cultural and built identity.

5.2 Evolving Cultural Landscape of Willunga Basin

Although Willunga Basin (together with South Australia) has been inhabited for almost 50,000 years by the Kaurna people (Allen and O’Connell 2003), it is only since European settlement in the mid-19th century that the region has seen the most significant changes to the landscape (Bickford 2001; Denham et al. 2012; Williams 1992). Ellen Stuart (2005) describes this region as a continually evolving cultural landscape, and argues in her thesis that the economic necessity of the settlers has shaped the landscape to what it is now, wherein the settlers rapidly cleared the land and introduced continually changing agricultural and horticultural crops to develop the region. While that may be true from the years 1840 until the late 1960s, there would have been more short-term economic

value in converting these lands for additional housing; however, it is evident that the authorities as well as local communities saw more long-term value in preserving this hinterland, and drew up relevant urban development and character preservation policies to mitigate rapid urbanisation and shifted the focus of urbanisation elsewhere, albeit among many heated debates (Johnston 2009).

Surveyed in 1837 and soon settled, Willunga Basin was one of the earliest known districts of South Australia. It was an important and busy commercial and agricultural centre, perched between the range and the coast, with fertile soil and abundant rainfall—perfect conditions to grow wheat, hay, vines and fruit; it also became an important place to stop over when headed to southern towns such as Victor Harbour. Discovery of slate in the mid 1800s added to its industrious nature.

‘The region of Willunga was first entered by officials in 1837 by Commissioner J. H. Fisher and Surveyor General Colonel Light. The expedition was heading towards Encounter Bay by land. They were accompanied by bushman Stephen Hack, a corporal’s guard of Marines from the ‘Buffalo’, and a bullock dray containing tents and swags. Officials were on horse drays and saddle horses along with servants and other men. After 12 miles of travel from Glenelg, making camp at what is now Tapleys Hill, encountering war cries but no natives, and going back for supplies and armouries, the expedition continued south after 2 days. After passing Aldinga, they stopped at the foot of the ranges. The troop was too weak, the country looked too difficult to traverse and untracked, and there was also the risk of the wild blacks of the coast districts. This is where the town of Willunga has since been established.’

(from Bull, *Early Experiences of Colonial Life in South Australia*, 1878, 17–18, published in *The Advertiser* (Adelaide), quoted in Dunstan 1977).

Situated at the foot of Ironstone Range (southern edge of Mount Lofty Ranges), with a high road to the southern districts passing through it, with views of the sea (which were considered to be important to the Irish), fertile land and slate quarries, Willunga Township became an important port of call for businesses, postal service, travellers and transport since it was first settled: ‘Not a dray passes to Myponga, Bangala, Yankalilla, Rapid Bay, or Encounter Bay, but calls at Willunga’ (extract from an article in the *Adelaide Observer*, 13 April 1844, quoted in Dunstan 1977). It was considered the hub of activities too: ‘The

central character of this locality renders it a kind of metropolis for the south' (*Chronicle*, 24 July 1858).

It should also be noted that there was no other easy access to Encounter Bay. As published by Mr Stephen Hack (in the *Adelaide Observer*, 23 June 1838), who tried to find a new way to reach the bay from Mount Barker and came across a saltwater river, 'running out of a high barren range at the back of Aldinghi Plains which eventually reaches the lake. The land on the eastern is bad, no fresh water', and he was convinced that this river shut off all communication from Encounter Bay and the only way to reach the bay was through Onkaparinga and Aldinghi (Dunstan 1977). Even today, going past Willunga is still the best way to reach the bay, although there is now a new roadway, B37, which winds through the hills to reach Encounter Bay.

On 21 December 1839, a notice was placed in the *Register* to view the map of this new intended town—Willunga, the halfway town to Encounter Bay, Currency Creek, etc.—at the office of Messrs. O'Halloran, Nixon and Co. The notice also stated that a government police station and a store were already erected, and the same allotment, no. 87, would be tenanted out to someone who would build an inn. This is one of the first instances marking the early settlement of Willunga, especially noting that there were water supplies and stringy bark forest nearby. The next year, on 26 August 1840, an article in the *Adelaide Chronicle*, notes that the Willunga district is 'beginning to be settled', where the township is 'laid out with about a dozen houses, an Inn and a Police Station' (Dunstan 1977). By 1851, there were about 60–70 houses in and around Willunga district, with about 5000 acres of cultivation (*The Register*, 26 March 1851). The same article goes on to describe that the houses were made of mainly brick and stone with slate roofs; there were some wood houses, and fencing was entirely post and rail.

Two sections were purchased by the Crown in 1840 from Mr E. Moore and surveyed as a township. On the south-eastern side of the township, the old Bush Inn was built on the hillside as a halting place for travellers between Adelaide and southern towns. However, the main township grew a little away, to the west of this inn.

By 1858, as per an article in the *Chronicle* (24 July 1858), the township had grown quite considerably, 'containing several churches and chapels, hotels, stores, court house and an

institute which supplies monthly lectures of a superior kind’, and the residents were prosperous and opulent.

Comparing the two townships of Aldinga and Willunga in particular, this seems to be the case even now, where Willunga seems to be the more affluent community, while Aldinga and Aldinga Beach residents belong to the middle and lower socio-economic strata. As per this article in *The Register* (26 March 1851), Port Willunga was planned and being built up in 1851. It was set up around the gully, which was eligible to become a port from where the local grains could be shipped to Adelaide. The author of the article observed, ‘a township is about to be formed, it is part laid out, with 20–30 buildings in the course of erection, several houses being built and one or two houses already occupied almost visible from Willunga’.

By 1851, Willunga was already a diverse society, with Irish reapers, Cornish quarry workers, a German doctor and churches of various denominations. The Irish felt at home here as the panoramic view of the region well suited their idea of a fine landscape with a glimpse of the sea. Cornish quarry workers were hired for their skills in working on similar quarries in Cornwall. Churches and street names reveal the diverse religious convictions and nationality of early settlers, indicating a large-hearted tolerance right from the beginning. Dunstan’s article about Willunga in 1837–1900 particularly notes that ‘the town is remarkably peaceful and well ordered; there is conspicuous absence of rowdy elements and though of different races and religious persuasions, the people “dwell together in unity”’ (*The Register*, 18 August 1927).

These diverse ideologies and tolerances seem to be reflected in the community, even today. Blessed with copious water sources (creeks and wells) and fertile soil, agricultural operations were quite vigorous right from the start, as noted by this article in 1851 in *The Register* (26 March 1851): ‘*Aldhinghi plains had light soil where limestone was dominant, but the lower parts of Willunga had blacker soil which was adapted for growing potatoes. Willunga township itself was built where red loam existed*’ (Dunstan 1977). From the early days, Willunga Basin—Bull’s Creek, Finnis Meadows and McLaren Vale—produced a good amount of wheat and other produce. Hay; chaff; cattle, for both beef and cream; pigs; and sheep for their wool were quite popular. ‘Large finely flavoured apples and prunes’ along with vines and other fruit were also grown. It was all

carted through Willunga Town to Port Willunga, from where they were all dispatched to Adelaide or overseas (*The Register*, 18 August 1927).

Horse-drawn carriages—called the ‘Fly Waggon’—were set up on 22 February 1840 to move goods and passengers, two days a week (Fridays and Mondays), from King William Street, Adelaide, to the Willunga Police Station (which is now the Court House Museum), stopping through various properties and townships along the way. A postal service was run every day by the police (*The Register*, 22 February 1840).

The discovery of good quality slate, seemingly inexhaustible, in close proximity to the sea, such that it could easily be shipped, also attracted new settlers to the area, especially from Cornwall. On 6 June 1840, *The Register* notes the fine quality of slate, which was seemingly ‘exhaustless’, extremely portable and in enough quantity to ‘supersede the use of shingles’, and expressed the wishful thinking that it would be exported to neighbouring colonies (Dunstan 1977). A few pioneers from Cornwall opened up the Delabole slate quarry, and there was good demand for flagstones for paving footpaths and roofing slates (*The Register*, 18 August 1927). The *Adelaide Chronicle* (26 August 1840) also notes that ‘the slate is of excellent quality and easy of access’. Another article in the *The Register* on the same day (26 August 1840) announces that the ‘slates appear to be nearly as good as English slates’ and recognises that the company intends to roof their buildings with this slate, although unclear how it would be transported to Port Adelaide, perhaps conveyed by dray to Onkaparinga, and then shipped to Port Adelaide by a small vessel. The first contract to export slate was set up on 21 April 1841 to ‘certain parties’ in Sydney (*Adelaide Chronicle*, 21 April 1841). There was so much pride in the quality of slate that one Mr E. Solomon put up a ‘very elegant’ mantelpiece of Willunga slate at his premises on Rundle Street and claimed it to be superior to anything imported (*Adelaide Observer*, 7 September 1844).

The City of Onkaparinga website doubts if the region would have flourished if not for the slate quarries (‘City of Onkaparinga: History Profile—Willunga’ n.d.). This could indeed be true, going by what Martin Dunstan (1977) writes in his book about the time in the late 1890s when the local community lobbied for a railway line to be established in order to be able to transport slate cheaply and thus be able to sell to neighbouring colonies at competitive costs. Train lines were set up in 1915 and closed in 1969.

In the early years, the township and the region did see its fair share of decline, with red rust destroying the crops, and slate sales going down with the introduction of asphalt and bitumen for footpaths and corrugated iron for roofing, which replaced the slate for a while. However, after gaining certificates of merit from the Sydney Exhibition in 1879, and Melbourne and Adelaide in 1881, Willunga slate became popular in all the towns of Australia, and by the 1920s, it had started to be ordered from Victoria, New South Wales and Western Australia. This hugely improved the economy of the region. Stock sales for farm produce and cattle, sheep, pigs and others started being held every Tuesday, which drew buyers from many areas (*The Register*, 18 August 1927).

Although there was fear of encountering natives in the first days of surveys, there are accounts of the natives from Encounter Bay coming up to offer their services to Willunga residents to cut corn. The *South Australian* (16 December 1842) notes that one of them in particular would surpass some whites. There was confidence that with little instruction, these natives could be taught to gather the harvest.

The local community seemed to have valued the large native gum trees, wattles. Of course, as was typical for colonists, they did grow many imported plants to recreate an environment that was more familiar to them—the English village. However, it is interesting to note that they were also fond of the native flora and found ways to delicately intersperse the two. This can be best noted in this excerpt: ‘Magnificent stately red gum in front form a fine natural park with glimpses of the sea, while on the slopes at the back, the blue gum holds sway’ (*The Register*, 18 August 1927).

Some other sentiments quoted in Dunstan’s (1977) chronicles are as follows: ‘rapidly improving township of Willunga’ (*The Register*, 1840); ‘The Willunga District ... is also beginning to be settled with a dozen or so houses’ (*Adelaide Chronicle*, 1840); ‘valuable District to the Colony’ (*The Register*, 1840); ‘greatest and happiest places in the world’ (Mr Norman of Willunga Farmers and Stockholders Club at their annual meeting, 1840); ‘Fine large trees and close award gives it the appearance of a park’ (*Adelaide Observer*, 1844); and ‘There is nothing grand, romantic or picturesque about it; all is so mellowed and blended as to produce an harmonious whole’ (*Adelaide Observer*, 1844).

Clearly, Willunga was a place of pride, hopes and desires for these early settlers, as can be seen in these archival notes, essays and newspaper articles from as recently as the

1970s. The same sense of pride, hope and desire seems to continue. This is very clear in the terms and phrases used by the interview respondents, social media discussions and recent newspaper articles, as will be described in the subsequent chapters.

5.3 Willunga’s Identity—Pride, Hopes and Desires

Earliest references to Willunga’s identity can be found in Martin Dunstan’s published scrapbook (Dunstan 1977), where words such as ‘beautiful valley’, ‘half-way town’, ‘good country’, ‘finest districts in the colony’, ‘very fine land’, ‘promise of a valuable district’ ‘panoramic perfection’, ‘pleasing residential town’, ‘a garden city’, ‘tree lined streets’ and ‘valuable district’ have been used to describe this region in official announcements and articles in the then-popular newspapers—the *Adelaide Chronicle*, *The Register* and *South Australian*. These same scrapbook entries also note that very few people have made this region home: ‘not yet made much progress’, ‘surprised to find so few people settled here as yet’, ‘only a dozen settlers’, ‘high hopes of its future prosperity’ and ‘exists more in name than in reality’.

Willunga township is proud of its many heritage buildings now and even in the past, with mention of churches built without the state support, calling them elegant buildings with tall tapering spires, an equal of any village church in England (Pike 1967). Around the same time, in 1971–72, another publication captured the essence of Willunga through sketches and narratives by two locals, Tony Parkinson, an artist, and Tony Lucas, a journalist. The two books, *Historic Willunga* (Parkinson 1971) and *Willunga Profile* (Parkinson and Lucas 1972), showcase some of the buildings and landscape of the region, with important notes on local resources, infrastructure, architecture and people. The books have drawings of buildings that existed at the time, along with a brief history of ownership, occupancy and style, and sometimes even a mention of the influence of these buildings on the local community. Phrases such as ‘land of milk and honey’, ‘between hills and sea’ (figure 5.5), ‘a settlement almost as old as Adelaide’, ‘most picturesque in the province’, ‘English Village Character’ and ‘largely unspoilt’ have been used.

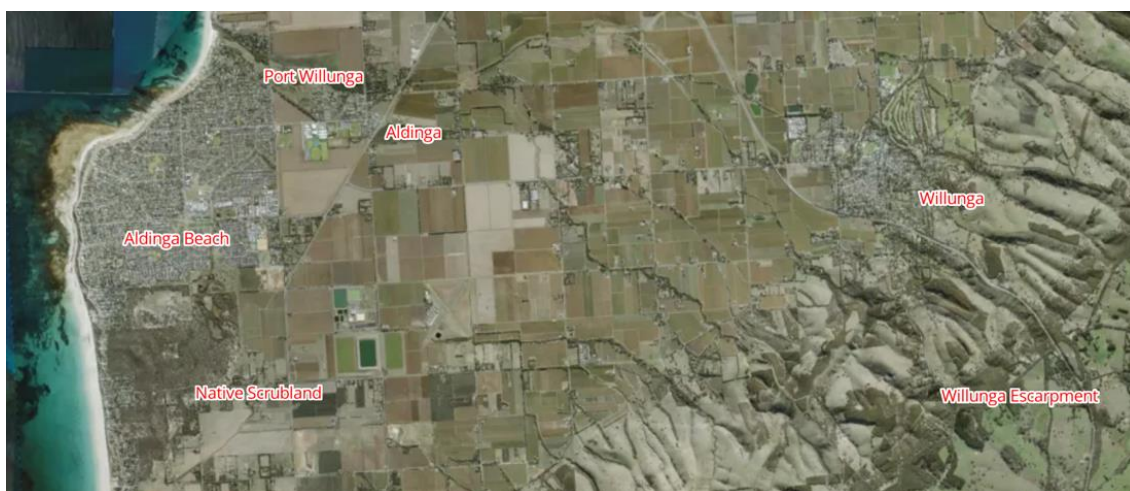


Figure 5.5: Between hills and sea: Location map of Willunga

(Source: Metromap)

Another article (*Observer*, 19 March 1859) describes the new Victory Road (now called Old Sellicks Hill Road), which was opened on 15 March 1859, as ‘romantically beautiful, this new mountain path ... discloses every kind of scenery that the ranges or the plains can boast, and affords from time to time the most unbounded prospect of the sea, with Kangaroo Island in the distance’ (Dunstan 1977).

It is clear in these publications that the sentiment of the local community was one of pride and a strong sense of desire to keep their way of life the same. This sentiment written in 1972 clearly echoes those sentiments: ‘It is hoped that the development of Willunga—its plains and town—can be intelligently balanced to keep it forever a “place of green trees”’ (*Willunga Profile*, 1972)

Concern for retaining the aesthetics of the natural environment can be seen as far back as 1927 in this statement: ‘But it is to be hoped that sound judgement will be exercised, and that some of the fine trees will be spared, both for aesthetic and commercial reasons ... With its fine old gum trees and charming view of undulating wooded country and sparkling blue waters of the gulf in the distance’ (*The Register*, 18 August 1927).

Interestingly, these feelings do not appear to have changed over the decades. Interview respondents for this research echoed similar sentiments, such as ‘hopefully the zoning will maintain the character of the area, by keeping some of its landscape’ (RC01), ‘[the] beauty of the town is the balance between the natural and the built—it is important not to lose that’ (RC13) and ‘the feeling of village that is created is really important’ (RC20).

Respondents of the qualitative interviews used similar phrases to describe Willunga, such as ‘soulful beautiful place (RC19), ‘artistic community (RC17), ‘sense of belonging (RC02) and ‘instant connection (RC22).

The community has shown itself to be very alert and conscious of its environment, air and water quality since the beginning, as per this notice in the *Advertiser* (4 July 1874), where several ratepayers asked the council ‘to take steps to prevent pollution on water in the creek crossing main road by discharge of flax-mill pits and also about the stench arising from flax-works’ (Dunstan 1977).

5.4 Harmony among Neighbouring Townships in the Basin

Although Willunga is seen to be the more affluent township and Aldinga its poor cousin, there has always been a harmony between the two townships, with Willunga residents always supporting and working in the best interests of the region as a whole.

One of the early examples dates to 1863, when a bigger church was proposed in Willunga to accommodate the growing congregation. At the same time, Aldinga residents approached Martin Dunstan, who was then presiding over the church services at Willunga and Noarlunga, asking whether, if they built a church, he would provide Sunday services. Surprised that there were so many settlers in Aldinga, Martin Dunstan reported this to the Willunga Church Building Committee, who decided if there was to be a church being built in Aldinga, then it would be ‘impolitic’ to build two such buildings, and hence decided to suspend their operations (Dunstan 1977). Thus, it can be inferred that the townships in the basin were harmonious, supportive and identified themselves as one unit.

5.5 Resisting Urban Sprawl

The literature review in the first few chapters has shown that while urban sprawl is regarded as a negative impact on sustainable development goals, there is still a huge demand for low-density living, especially as one moves outwards from city centres. Small rural townships that lie at the fringe of these metropolitan cities do not want to be associated with urban sprawl for a different reason—fear of loss of their rural character and lifestyle.

It will be evident in the later chapters that the residents of Willunga Basin have long resisted urbanisation in the region for various reasons, but primarily for its scenic beauty and the built environment that was developed in the early 1900s. All development applications and development plan amendments have met with resistance from the local community members, with phrases such as this ‘will block our views of the Willunga escarpment’ (RC18) (figure 5.6), ‘this will create ecological problems’ (RC15), ‘rural backyard should be retained’ (RC19), ‘local character will be lost’ (RC09) and ‘there will be further erosion of wetlands and buffer between urban land and scrubland’ (RC21).



Figure 5.6: Visual connection to Willunga Escarpment
(Photographs by author (2022) of street views in Aldinga Beach)

There are a few members who welcome the change, but as noted by some of the urban planners and interview respondents, their support of urbanisation tends to stem from their

desire for monetary benefits and strategic investments in the land. More of this will be discussed in Chapter 7.

As early as 1858, visitors to Willunga (also the local residents) have admired the landscape of the region and published much praise in newspapers. According to an article in the *Chronicle* (24 July 1858), visitor Mr Wilson of the *Melbourne Argus* (daily newspaper) described the region as ‘realizing his most sanguine expectations of the future of Australia ... the numerous thriving farms striking out in every direction are particularly gratifying, being mapped out into paddocks and sections with geometrical regularity, the alternating colours which their various crops in season present to the eye being especially pleasing’. The article itself goes on to say that ‘the substantial and thriving appearance of the numerous homesteads dotting the landscape, and the picturesque character of the village at the foot of the hill, attract the notice of every traveller’ (Dunstan 1977).

Around 1934, after the Great Depression, the South Australian Government came to the conclusion that the state could not depend on its ‘agricultural fringe’ for economic prosperity and was preparing for industrial expansion (Pike 1967). As has been seen in the previous sections, Willunga’s pride lies in the fact that they have been resisting the temptations of urbanising and have preferred to retain the rural function as an important food production region.

Willunga Basin was included in the metropolitan Adelaide boundaries in the 1960s, but the comprehensive report by Stuart Hart (South Australia Town Planning Committee 1962) recognised the importance of retaining the rural nature of this region. The local council boundaries (City of Onkaparinga) consist of half rural and half urban areas, resulting in rural–urban conflicts within its jurisdiction. As will be seen in the later chapters, while there are community members who value their rural lifestyle and resist urbanisation of their region, there are property developers who buy land as a strategic investment and embrace urbanisation of the region.

Stephanie Johnston (2009), in her master’s thesis, called for placing ‘landscape’ at the centre of planning policy in an effort to preserve and enhance rural landscapes while they become absorbed by urban boundaries. The thesis examines the theory of landscape evaluation, exploring in particular the case of Willunga Basin/Southern Vales, investigating the processes of policymaking. While this is an important study in

identifying aesthetic value of (rural) landscapes, especially those at the fringe of metropolitan cities, and efforts to preserve it, it places much less emphasis on the socio-cultural aspects, economic impact and rural–urban conflict of the fringes. However, this is still an important study that informs and guides the current research by setting a path of enquiry into the various Policies and Acts that have shaped the urban form of this region.

5.6 Tracing Regulatory Milestones for Willunga

Initially, the Hundred of Willunga was managed by the District Road Board from 1840 to 1853. Apart from Willunga, it covered a larger area including Aldinga, McLaren Vale, Noarlunga, Lower Meadows and parts of Myponga District. Aldinga and Noarlunga later became separate districts. In 1853, under the *District Councils Act*, the District Council of Willunga was founded to govern the Hundred of Willunga (which included Aldinga) and some parts of the Hundred of Kuitpo. This was part of one of the earliest local government bodies to be set up in South Australia to be governed by councillors elected by the ratepayers (Hosking and Universal Publicity Company, eds. 1936). However, being a large area, it brought with it its own challenges of governance and allocation of funds for maintenance of infrastructure such as roads and jetties. Soon, in 1856, Aldinga residents lobbied successfully, stating that the District Council of Willunga was ‘obstructing their development’ and created their own local government called the Coastal District Council of Aldinga (Marsden 2012). This is probably the first instance of conflict between the two regions of Aldinga and Willunga, although they form part of the same basin. Nearly 80 years later, in 1932, during the economic depression between the two world wars, by the recommendation of the Local Government Commission to rationalise council areas, the District Council of Aldinga was dissolved and included as part of the District Council of Willunga (Marsden 2012).

Willunga remained a rural region until 1962, when it was first included in South Australia’s first metropolitan plan (Johnston 2009). The plan, however, identified this region as a ‘visually significant region’ and declared it a ‘permanent rural zone’. Conflict between state and local governments over issues of urban development and preservation of local character led to a review of the South Australian Planning System in 1990–92, which involved community participation. The result was that one of the key components

of the planning strategy for metropolitan Adelaide included an agenda to protect Willunga Basin from further urban development.⁹

In 1997, the District Council of Willunga was amalgamated with Noarlunga and Happy Valley to become the City of Onkaparinga (Marsden 2012), although it continued to have its own development plan until early 2000.¹⁰

In the 1970s, the Willunga Basin began to attract those seeking a change in lifestyle. This prompted Alan Hutchings (then Director of Town Planning) to support an alternative plan—Monarto New Town—to steer development elsewhere, away from the basin.¹¹ The thesis continues to discuss the developments further that identify parts of the basin—mainly coastal, such as Seaford, Aldinga Beach and Sellicks—for medium-density urban growth, and the policies that were drawn up specifically to protect and preserve much of the basin. It discusses in detail the following milestones (as shown in Figure 5.7):

- **1973:** The Urban Land Trust/Land Management Corporation raised the minimum land size from 10 acres to 40 acres to discourage hobby farming.
- **1982/86:** The landscape character objectives recognised the need to protect landscape values.
- **1987:** MOSS (Metropolitan Open Space System) was established to protect environmentally sensitive areas such as Aldinga scrub and Onkaparinga estuary, and a long-term strategy for urban containment versus urban expansion was developed by the Department of Environment and Planning.
- **1992:** One of the key components of the Planning Strategy for Metropolitan Adelaide (2003) was to protect Willunga Basin from further urban development.

⁹ The outcomes of the 1990-92 review, undertaken by the Bannon government, merit more detailed discussion beyond the scope of the present study, not least because of its introduction of the first of a new generation of metropolitan strategies informed by sustainability principles and because of the emphasis on containing urban growth and on protecting the Willunga Basin from development. Amongst other measures, this including an initial rejection of contemporary proposals to build an expressway to the west of Adelaide and then on to the south. The present Southern Expressway was commenced by the Liberal government which succeeded the Bannon government in the second half of the 1990s.

¹⁰ The last Willunga (DC) Metropolitan Development Plan was amended on 25 November 1999 and consolidated on 20 January 2000, after which the City of Onkaparinga Development Plan was enforced.

¹¹ Hutchings was a supporter but evidently not the originator of the Monarto proposal. See Stretton (1989).

- **1994:** A detailed study called ‘3 townships’ and various memorandums of understanding (MoUs) led to the creation of historic conservation zones in Willunga and historic character zones at Port Willunga and Aldinga.
- **2000:** Councils were amalgamated, and many of the policies which were introduced earlier were retained and a vague ‘desired future character’ for Willunga was formulated (although it is not clear what those characters are).
- **2003:** In the Planning Strategy for Metropolitan Adelaide (2003), urban growth boundary was introduced for the first time in Australia. This was inspired by Portland, Oregon, USA; which reinforced township boundaries for Willunga and McLaren Vale, while Aldinga and its hinterland became part of the area marked for urban growth.
- **2013:** Character preservation district boundaries were drawn, which excluded Aldinga (already part of the urban growth area) and included Willunga and McLaren Vale in this basin.
- **2016:** This is the year that saw planning reforms being legislated by passing of the Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016 (PDI) which laid the foundation for the new Planning and Design Code. Another significant development was the marking of environment and food production areas which included parts of Willunga Basin
- **2017:** UNESCO Bid submitted for national recognition
- **2019:** SA Planning and Design Code is established and published for consultation

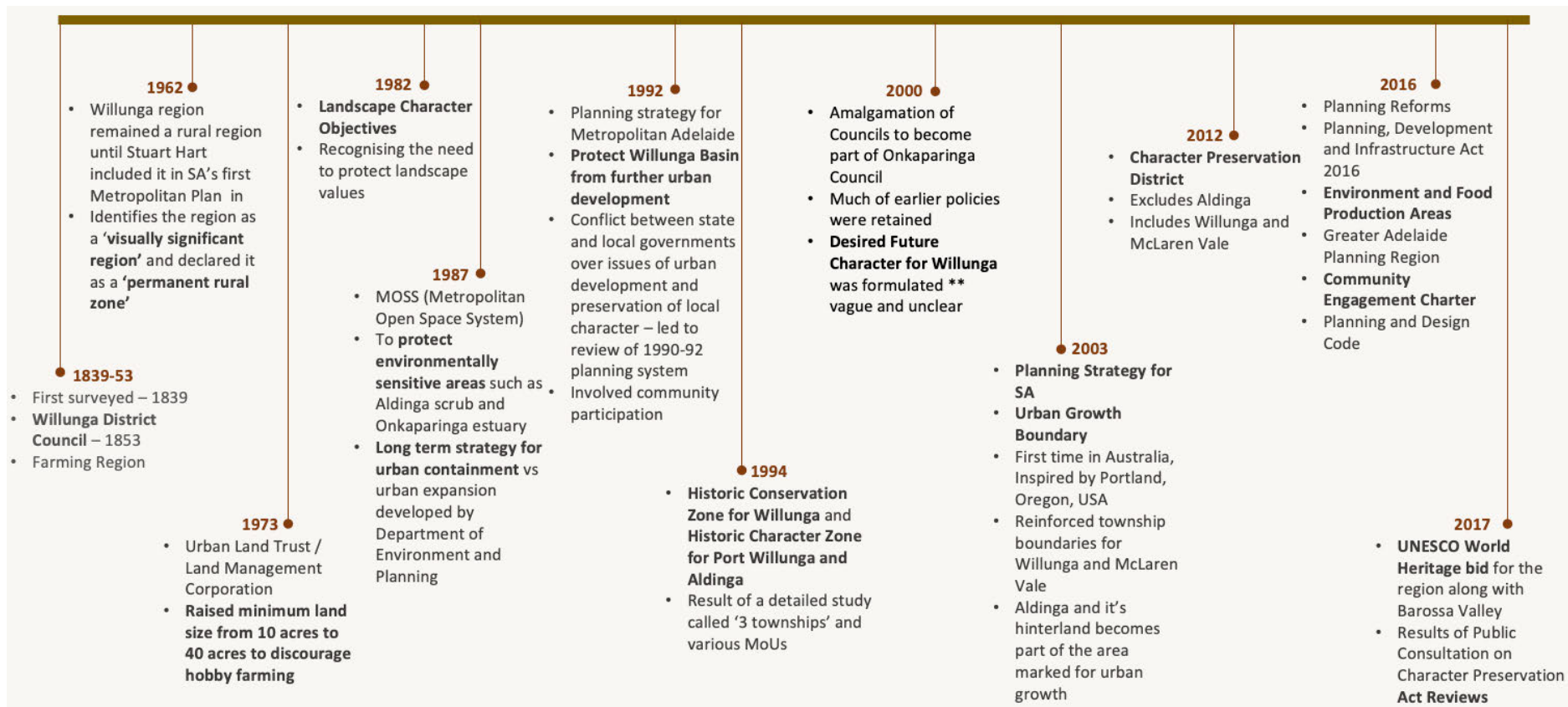


Figure 5.7: Chronology of development in Willunga
(Source: author)

5.7 Character Preservation Act 2012

The *Character Preservation Act 2012* came into operation in January 2013 for two districts of the Adelaide metropolitan area, McLaren Vale and Barossa, with the intention to protect the special character of these two districts. This legislation was inspired by similar legislation protecting Napa Valley in California.

The special characters or character values of these districts are identified as follows:

- rural and natural landscape
- visual amenity of the district
- heritage attributes of the district
- built form of the townships
- viticultural, agriculture and associated industries of the district
- scenic and tourism attributes of the district.

The provisions in this Act are further to those in the *Development Act 1993*, and are recognised by the South Australian Planning Strategy to inform changes to development policies.

The most significant aspect of the *Character Preservation Act* is that it effectively prohibits further residential allotments, and any associated development applications must be refused by local governments with no appeal rights. While the local development plans have been amended so that local rules reflect the objectives of the *Character Preservation Act*, this legislation is also much stronger than what local development plan policies can achieve.

The DPTI, South Australia, presented a review of the Act (Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure, 2017) and invited public comments from 7 December 2017 to 28 February 2018 (Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure, 2018). During the 4-month consultation, 30 written submissions and 10 online feedback forms were received. Participating people were from the local government sector, members of parliament, peak bodies, industry groups and individual community members.

As a result of the review, it was determined that there needed to be a proper review and investigation into boundary adjustments, policy refinements and improved processes to make such amendments. Meanwhile, it was concluded that there would be no changes to the Act. There is little clarity on when a further detailed review may be undertaken based on information as of May 2022.

Four main recommendations were summarised in the final review report as published by the DPTI. Their discussion paper claims that the Act increased administrative processes for the local governments (City of Onkaparinga and Barossa Council), while the report acknowledges that there have been misunderstandings about the intent and reach of the Act, in that local families have not been in favour of this Act, but does not state what is being done to clarify citizen doubts and gain the confidence of the local communities.

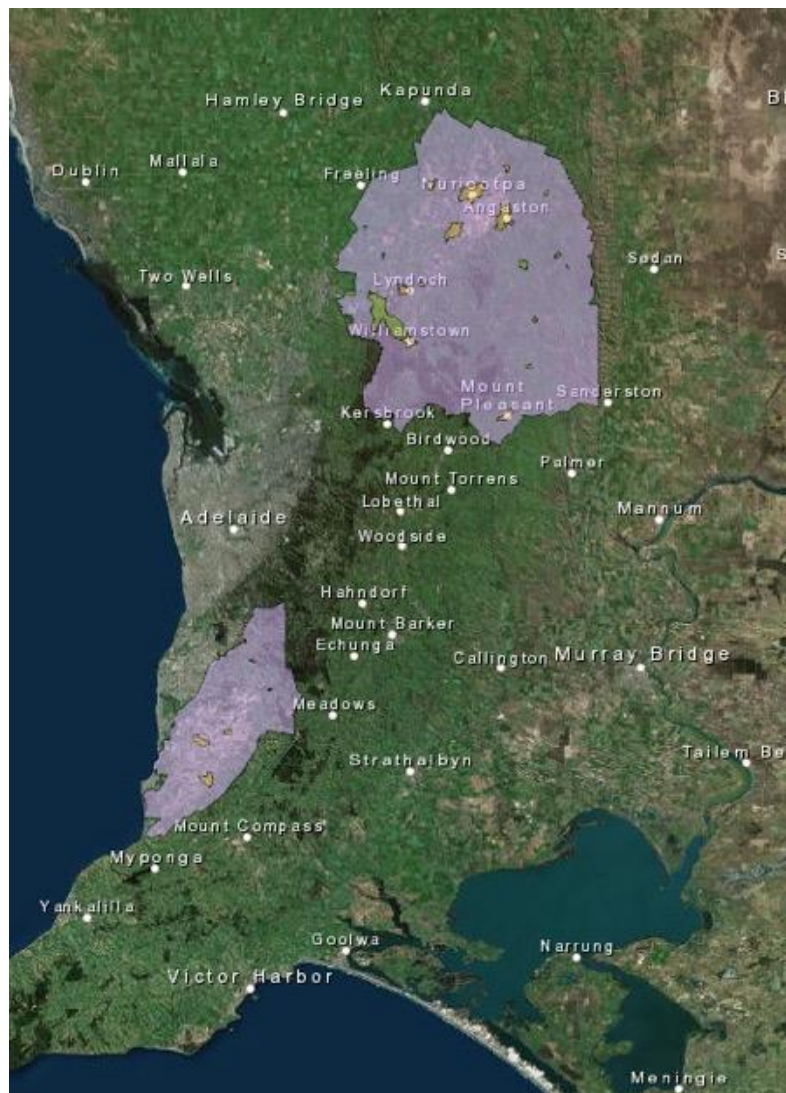


Figure 5.8: Character Preservation District boundaries (Source: <http://location.sa.gov.au>)

5.8 UNESCO World Heritage Bid

In 2011, spearheaded by the City of Onkaparinga, local community groups and a consortium of nine other local councils jointly proposed that the agrarian landscape of the Mount Lofty Ranges be placed on UNESCO's World Heritage Site listing. The Mount Lofty Ranges stretch from the southern coast of Cape Jervis to Peterborough in the north, covering portions of Willunga Basin, Meadows, Adelaide Hills, Barossa Valley and Clare. Political boundaries of seven local councils divide the ranges, but this is a unique gesture where the boundaries were ignored and advisory groups were set up to collaborate and address the requirements for National Heritage Listing, the first step towards bidding for UNESCO World Heritage Site listing.

Set up in 1972 to identify sites of cultural and natural heritage, UNESCO's World Heritage Site listing has been criticised as imbalanced (Steiner and Frey 2011), with Eurocentric listings and the creation of a *culture of economic and political quagmires* (Keough 2011) instead of achieving its primary goal of protecting these sites. However, the listing is still a powerful international legal instrument (Strasser 2002) to safeguard global heritage, thereby enabling recognition of major attractions for cultural tourism and icons of national identity (Shackley 1998). The most significant benefit of being listed as a World Heritage Site is international recognition of the region, and many regions continue to aspire to be listed.

The ten local councils of South Australia, in partnership with Regional Development Australia and the University of Adelaide, set up the Mount Lofty Ranges World Heritage Bid Project Management Group. The working members believe that the food, wine and tourism regions of the Barossa Valley, Adelaide Hills, McLaren Vale (located within Willunga Basin) and Fleurieu Peninsula have great potential to be listed as a World Heritage Site, aimed at delivering economic, cultural and environmental benefits to the region and bringing international recognition to the region (Mount Lofty Ranges n.d.).

Winning a fresh grant (\$40,000) in 2017 from the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Cities and Regional Development to set up a digital knowledge bank for the Mount Lofty Ranges World Heritage Bid, the team continues to address the various criteria for first being listed as a National Heritage Site by setting up working groups and workshops. Although not supported initially by the state government, the group continues

to work relentlessly, with more local councils, local businesses and community groups joining in, and the bid was estimated to be completed by June 2020 ¹². Rebekah Sharkie, member of parliament of Mayo Electorate, which lies within Mount Lofty Ranges, also supports this bid and launched it in the parliament, saying, ‘I believe that the character of our landscape and our prime agricultural land should be protected from over development’ (Sharkie 2017).

With intentions to be protected from over development, aspiring to be listed as a World Heritage Site shows that the local communities consider this region of great importance and want to protect their current way of life. While the bid is for a much larger site, portions of Willunga Basin are located within this region, making the region even more suitable to situate this research in.

5.9 Grassroots Organisations Directing Development of the Region

This section traces the voices of the community and their methods by which they have communicated their aspirations and desires be known, be it to just figure out the direction they want their way of life to head towards or to participate in a formal system by which they can present to the authorities their collective view over issues that matter to them.

One of the first accounts of a non-political ‘club’ or community organisation that took active interest in the changes within the region and made it their priority to engage with the members was Willunga Farmers and Stockholders Club, who in their annual meeting on 26 February 1844 resolved to leave two copies of legal Acts at the club premises, one to stay at the club at all times and the other available for borrowing for 6 days. Some of those initial Acts exhibited in the club were the *Scab in Sheep Act*, *Waste Lands Act*, *Masters and Servants Act*, and *Impounding Act* (*The Register*, 20 March 1844; Dunstan 1977)

It is evident since the early days that local residents of the region seem to have taken great interest in how their region is being developed and have voiced their views quite explicitly with no inhibitions. This letter by a resident to the editor of the *Adelaide Chronicle* (30

¹² At the time of submitting this thesis, the bid has not been successful and currently under review by the stakeholders who are working on strengthening the bid by conducting further research and analysis.

October 1858) regarding a proposed tramline speaks a similar language as can be heard today in the region: ‘*The government cannot have consulted the inhabitants of the district ... constructing a tramway between Willunga and Port Willunga would be a useless expenditure of public money*’. The letter goes on to explain how the existing road with a little bit of enhancement would be much cheaper and more beneficial to the numerous settlers along the hills (Dunstan 1977).

In 1859, Sellicks Hill Road too seems to have been the subject of dispute, which was finally settled by adoption of the ‘Delisser’s Line’ (*Observer*, 19 March 1859). While exact details of the dispute are not clear, it seems to have focused on the estimate of constructing the road, which finally, despite the extravagant stonework on the bridges and culverts, was built at one-fifth of the cost of the estimate given by the superintending surveyor. Mr Delliser was the one who calculated it to be much lower, which apparently was the case (Dunstan 1977). Although this might not have been a dispute between the local community and the government, but rather between two officials, it can be observed that the public seemed to be increasingly vigilant about such developments. On the other hand, the City of Onkaparinga website states that it was the residents who met up at the Aldinga Hall in 1859 and insisted on the new road, and it was finally made possible by the argument of one John Norman and others. (‘City of Onkaparinga: History Profile—Sellicks Beach’, n.d.). This is yet another example of the local community coming together to direct the way their region is developed.

In keeping with the fun and flair of their primary occupation—agriculture—the community conducted ploughing matches every year, aptly named ‘Willunga Ploughing Match’ and started in 1847. There are many newspaper articles describing the quality of the chosen ground for the match, moisture content of the soil, participant details, and of course the winners and the jubilation that followed. It would almost seem that they were playing a cricket match, but displaying a more useful skill and a spirit of healthy competition. While in itself this event might not have made any contribution to directing how the region was developed, it is another example of how the community would come together and foster social connections outside of religious or intellectual circles.

Yet another example of grassroots community organisations contributing to the region’s development is that quoted by Martin Dunstan (1977), a historian, where he was invited by the residents of Aldinga to participate in a public meeting to consider building a church

at Aldinga. He seemed to have been amused by that invite as only three families attended church at Willunga, and it was assumed that there were very few church people in Aldinga. However, 23 settlers arrived for the meeting and a committee was quickly formed to undertake the project. The author also recalls the energy and perseverance of the committee of ladies, which was also formed later and made this undertaking a success. This shows the initiatives exhibited by the local communities in developing the region.

Martin Dunstan (1977) also writes about the decline in sales of the very fine quality Willunga slate because of lack of proper transport facilities. He worried that local slate was being sold in Melbourne at a cost higher than that of slate being imported from England and America—only because the process of transporting it from Willunga was a tedious and expensive affair. Thus, he went on to call public meetings, appoint committees, and sign petitions to bring the matter to the parliament for the construction of a railway line to enable easy and cheap transport of slate and other produce of the region to Adelaide, from where it could be exported easily to other colonies. This community movement was so successful that the House of Assembly set up a committee to enquire into the matter. On strong recommendation by the committee, the government set forth a Bill. However, because of government changes, proposed amendments to the route were made, to use a shorter route along the coast or go through Clarendon and service more of the region, which made the line more expensive. Consequently, a fresh survey was required and the project was unfortunately shelved (Dunstan 1977). Nevertheless, this initiative no doubt laid the foundation for the railway line to be constructed later in 1915 and closed in 1969. While there were a few more railway meetings held in 1884 and 1886, the project picked up momentum 20 years later when the community felt they should claim because of the new and growing wine industry and the lure of tourists from Adelaide to visit the southern seaside resorts; in addition, by cooperating with Clarendon, there was a better chance of the railway line being approved by the government (*Observer*, 1899).

Thus, it can be seen that the local communities have been actively engaged in the development of the region, collaborating with neighbouring regions, lobbying the government agencies and provoking consciousness of members within the community.

These sentiments have been expressed even by those people who might not have made Willunga their home, but had an opportunity to work for/in Willunga and felt a connection

with the community. This can be traced across a long timeframe, as reflected in what Martin Dunstan said in his book in 1977 and what Iris Iwanicki (urban and regional planner), one of the interview respondents (RC01), said in 2017, four decades later: ‘Hence, in quitting the district where I had labored so long, I felt I was quitting many to whom I had become sincerely attached’ (Dunstan 1977) and ‘The elected members complained I was being biased ... I was called a greenie ... which was a compliment in a way’ (RC01).

Chapter 6: Research Design

Theories and observations are the two pillars of science. Scientific research operates at two levels: a theoretical level and an empirical level. The theoretical level is concerned with developing abstract concepts about a natural or social phenomenon and relationships between those concepts (i.e., build “theories”), while the empirical level is concerned with testing the theoretical concepts and relationships to see how well they reflect our observations of reality, with the goal of ultimately building better theories. Scientific research involves continually moving back and forth between theory and observations.

(Anol Battacherjee, *Social Science Research: Principles, Methods, and Practices*, 2012, p. 3)

This research explores the contextual application of bioregional urbanism principles in an environmentally conscious community within the limitations of rural–urban conflicts at the fringe. Particularly, it seeks to understand the holistic process of bioregional urbanism that engages with local communities to achieve sustainable urban development goals. Previous chapters have highlighted the contested nature of sustainability, urban awareness and public participation. The attributes of bioregional urbanism, urban development policies and community engagement practices at the rural–urban fringe have shaped the research process for this study and the way in which data have been collected and interpreted.

This chapter begins by reiterating the research objectives and research questions in section 6.1 and establishes the rationale for choosing the mixed qualitative approach (section 6.2). The chapter then puts forward the research framework for situating this research within urban development policies, community engagement practices and architectural identity paradigms in section 6.3. Subsequently, various methods employed for collecting data, analysing data and presentation are described in section 6.4. Finally, the criteria for case study selection and limitations of this research are discussed in section 6.5.

6.1 Research Objectives and Research Questions

An artificial boundary line runs through Willunga Basin from north to south, dividing the basin into two regions, with Aldinga in the west and Willunga in the east—regions with completely different development policies and practices. The region immediately surrounding Aldinga township is earmarked for urban growth while the area around Willunga township is protected from urbanisation by the *Character Preservation Act*. This, no doubt, has an impact on shaping the cultural landscape and urban development patterns of the whole basin. Given the current situation, where urban development is inevitable around Aldinga, this research explores the planning policies and practices that guide urbanisation to take place in a way that is sensitive to and upholds the region's cultural landscapes and local identity.

The main objective of this thesis is to critique the effectiveness of community engagement tools adopted by responsible authorities (top-down) as well as by local communities (bottom-up) regarding matters that shape the cultural landscape of the region, particularly that of urban development policies and practices.

This research is conducted on the basis of the hypothesis that there is a gap between theoretical ideals of bioregional planning principles, urban development policies and the practice of urbanisation of the fringe to address the rural–urban conflict.

The primary research question is as follows: How does architectural identity, as a tangible component of local character, provoke the consciousness of a local community to frame sustainable urban development policies at the rural–urban fringe?

To answer this question, the thesis asks associated sub-questions directly related to the study area, Willunga Basin:

1. How is local character recognised in urban development policies and what instruments are in place to retain it in the context of development pressure and potential conflicts at the rural–urban fringe?
2. What are the benefits and limitations of public participation tools and tactics currently in use in the Willunga Basin to mediate the interpretation of urban

development policies in practice by local communities (bottom-up) as well as responsible authorities (top-down)?

3. What is the impact of the local community's consciousness and engagement on the changing architectural and urban design norms of the region, and on its urban development policies more generally?

6.2 Rationale for Methodology

The architect should be equipped with knowledge of many branches of study and varied kinds of learning, for it is by his judgement that all work done by the other arts is put to test. This knowledge is the child of practice and theory.

(Vitruvius, circa 40 BCE, translated by Morris Morgan, *Vitruvius : the Ten Books on Architecture*, 1960 p. 3)

In the above quotation, given our current understanding of the world and how it operates, it might as well be worthwhile to use the phrase 'sciences and arts' in place of just 'arts'. So, Vitruvius's statement would be even more applicable now if it were to be read thus: 'The architect should be equipped with knowledge of many branches of study and varied kinds of learning, for it is by his [her] judgement that all work done by the other [sciences and] arts is put to test. This knowledge is the child of practice and theory'.

Science is a systematic and organised body of knowledge in any area of inquiry, be it natural sciences or social sciences,¹³ where knowledge is acquired and expanded by scientific methods. While the nature of natural science is itself very precise, accurate and objective, social science research can be ambiguous, uncertain and subjective (Bhattacharjee 2012; Denzin and Lincoln 2005). Study of urbanism, urban development and sustainable development can easily be situated within the discipline of natural sciences. However, the body of knowledge cannot be complete without addressing the socio-cultural factors. Any effort to contribute to the vast body of knowledge in this discipline should attempt to uncover the complexities of human aspirations; human connections to people, places and objects; and the actions that humans take to fulfil these aspirations and keep their connections with people, places and objects. This research

¹³ Natural Science is the study of naturally occurring phenomenon like light, sound, heat, objects, matter, etc., encompassing earth sciences, life sciences and physical sciences. Social Science is the study of people, societies, culture, economics and individual or collective behaviours (Bhattacharjee 2012).

explores the social aspects of sustainable development and hence is situated within the discipline of urban studies, relying heavily on the research methodologies employed by social science scholarships.

Scientific inquiry, even within the discipline of social sciences, demands a systematic approach to collect and analyse data, using various approaches, tools and techniques within a given research framework (Creswell 2003; Denzin and Lincoln 2005; Blaikie 1993). Scientific enquiry can be qualitative or quantitative. Qualitative research focuses on a particular case, exploring concepts and experiences, expressed by feelings and words, seeking to gain in-depth insight into the research topic. Quantitative research, on the other hand, focuses on testing theories and assumptions expressed in numbers and graphs, seeking to establish generalised understanding of the research topic (Groat and Wang 2013; Denzin and Lincoln 2005; Bhattacharjee 2012; Yin 2009). As this study focuses on interpreting and theorising the role of local communities in practising bioregional urbanism or sustainable urban development at the rural–urban fringe, it is deduced that adopting a qualitative case study research methodology would be best suited for such a study.

‘Case study methods can be peculiarly pertinent to theories of place both because they have the depth to explore the nuances of socio-spatial reciprocity and because differences between places are central to their definitions—places are cases. While case studies may lack generalisability, they draw their lessons from senses of place that may be missing from the distant geographical gaze’ (Dovey, Woodcock and Wood 2009a, 2009b).

The primary strategy adopted for this research is the case study, especially as the research deals with theories of ‘place’ as one of the main aspects of bioregional urbanism. Case study research has long been critiqued and challenged as having insufficient precision, objectivity or rigour but is still a popular method of research, not only in social science research but also in practice-oriented fields such as urban planning and architecture, by focusing on an individual unit, studying in detail and intensively a phenomenon in context, and using multiple data collection methods (Yin 2009; Groat and Wang 2013; Ritchie et al. 2014; Creswell 2003). This study understands the limitations of using qualitative case study research, but given the context and area of enquiry, trying to adapt quantitative methods would not be appropriate for this research. Adequate measures, such

as clear methods and stringent criteria, have been applied in the study to ensure that the data are reliable and interpretive inferences are valid. As Bhattacharjee (2012) outlines, case study research is an *intensive longitudinal study* that can be used in an *interpretive manner* to build theories and draw meaningful inferences and *understand dynamic processes* underlying a phenomenon. For this research, the *underlying phenomenon* is the process of urbanisation of Willunga Basin, where the community participation is *interpreted* by intensively studying the urban development policies and practices to reinforce the theories embedded in bioregional urbanism. Interpretive research uses a ‘sense-making’ process to analyse a social reality (ontology), with emphasis on understanding people’s perspectives and experience on the basis of subjective interpretations of the participants (epistemology) (Bhattacharjee 2012; Yanow and Schwartz-Shea 2015; Ritchie et al. 2014).

To fulfil the main aim of this research to unfold the role of a conscious community in sustainable urban development of a bioregion, the study analyses relevant data from three different perspectives. First, the research explores the legislated policies and guidelines around urban development at the fringe. Second, the study analyses the role of community engagement tools and tactics used by the authorities, as well as by the local communities, to shape the decisions around urban development policies and practices. Third, the study seeks to understand the impact of pre-existing architectural identities and local character on future urban practices (see Figure 6.1).

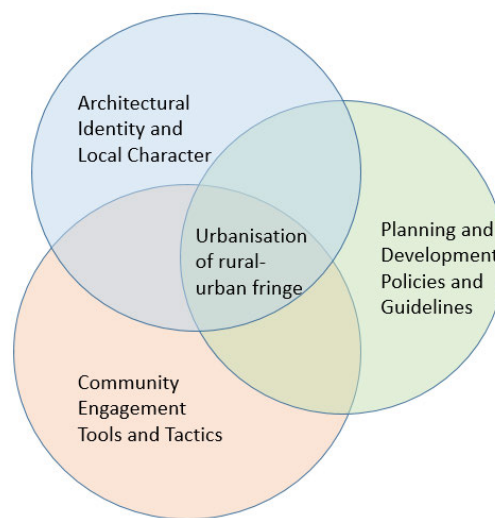


Figure 6.1: Role of conscious community in fringe urbanisation

This research adopts the method of phenomenology to study the architectural design outcomes of six specific case studies, by following the process of negotiations between development approval authorities and local communities. At an empirical level, this research adopts the explanatory and interpretive research techniques.

Qualitative analysis techniques cannot really be independent of the researcher's personal knowledge of the social context within which the data have been collected. The researcher also is required to exhibit analytical and integrative skills to make 'sense' of the phenomenon or theory that is being explored. However, to ensure that such research is free from the researcher's preconceived notions and bias towards the data, scholars have developed various methodologies for collecting and analysing qualitative data. Glaser and Strauss (1967) developed a method of 'constant comparative analysis', which they called 'grounded theory'. Although based in sociology and applied initially in nursing studies, this methodology has been quite popular, improved and applied by various other disciplines and scholars. Grounded theory primarily integrates both quantitative and qualitative methods and explores theories that are 'grounded' in actual data, and theories are further developed after the data have been collected. Other types of analysis include 'content/sentiment analysis' and 'hermeneutic analysis'. Content or sentiment analysis is a technique used to identify participants' opinions and attitudes towards a particular situation, person or item, using text analytics coding and sometimes natural language processing. Hermeneutic analysis, on the other hand, 'interprets' the subjective meaning of what has been said by people in the context of the research topic, with the assumption that the participants' experience is an important part of the narrative.

6.3 Methodology: Research Strategies

This research adopts qualitative measures to capture a spectrum of community voices—formal and informal—to understand and analyse what people value and how these values could/should direct planning and development policies. It examines Willunga Basin as a place that seemingly has managed to slow down urbanisation to some extent and, where urbanised, is developed in a way that fits in with the local character. These development projects have been implemented in a fashion that not only respects the community’s sense of place but also manages to enhance the natural wealth of the region.

The main research question triggers a series of sub-questions: How did Willunga manage to direct urbanisation in a way that complements the bioregion? What planning policies and building regulations have been established to guide the development to be aligned with local character? What is the level of engagement by local communities in shaping the design and character of some recent development projects? Were there any conflicts? How were they resolved? What were the outcomes? These are the tertiary questions that this study addresses in particular.

Such sub-questions demand a closer look at the methods and methodology that are best suited for conducting the research. A mixed-methods approach has been adopted to produce empirical data in juxtaposition with the local community’s level of consciousness of their bioregion and their level of engagement with the urban development agencies. The research takes the stand that there is value in anecdotal evidence, especially when overlaid with formal factual data, and hence embarks on studying policy documents, media reports, official documents and archival documents, as well as conducting semi-structured interviews. Anecdotal evidence is gathered through face-to-face interviews, where sometimes the interviewer provides some empirical data. Empirical data are collected through detailed study of planning policy documents, development plans, building regulations, project documents available at the local council, minutes of meetings, aerial photographs and finally semi-structured interviews.

The research focuses on five main themes, in particular, within Willunga Basin, is as follows:

1. **Significant Development Projects** in the basin, identifying them and studying them in detail
2. **Democratic Process** and methods of engaging with the community in shaping these projects
3. **Built Environment**, understanding local character, cultural landscapes and aspirations for the future
4. **Community Impact** of urban development as experienced by residents
5. **Ecology** as valued by local communities and the impact of urban development on local ecology.

To explore these themes, a spectrum of community voices is collected from the following sources:

1. direct face-to-face interviews—23 respondents
2. Facebook discussions in closed groups—4 closed groups
3. newspaper articles and responses
4. responses gathered by local government from the public notification processes—minutes of the meetings and actual responses where possible
5. voice recordings of community hearings at Development Assessment Commission (DAC) and State Commissioner Assessment Panel (SCAP) meetings—2.

Some of the literature on methods and methodology that inspired this direction of research are as follows:

Ways of looking: John Habraken (1998) suggests three ‘ways of looking’ at the built environment: (1) material organisation (order of form), (2) territorial organisation (order of place) and (3) cultural constraints (order of understanding). This research intends to apply these methods by looking at local character (order of form) at the fringe in Willunga Basin (order of place) driven by communities that resist urbanisation and work towards retaining their ways of life and cultural landscape (order of understanding).

Ways of knowing: Leonie Sandercock (1975, 1990, 1998) explores multiple ways of knowing (Landry and Wood 2008), such as learning through dialogues, from experience and local knowledge, reading symbolic and non-verbal evidence, through contemplative or appreciative knowledge, and by doing or action planning. It must however be noted that this literature is embedded in deep social theory, and although this research adopts the approach of social research, it does not delve too much into these methods.

Cultural mapping: Living practices are a reflection of socio-cultural value systems, traditional rituals and belief systems, and are best visible in both tangible and intangible elements. In 1995, the Australian Government took up a landmark project to develop an ethical methodology for cultural mapping. It has been published as *Mapping Culture—A Guide to Cultural and Economic Development in Communities* (Young 2008). The guide describes that ‘cultural mapping involves a community identifying and documenting local cultural resources. Through this research cultural elements are recorded—the tangibles like galleries, craft industries, distinctive landmarks, local events and industries, as well as the intangibles like memories, personal histories, attitudes and values’. This research uses this framework of cultural mapping and applies it to analyse built forms of a community. A community’s relationship with their built environment is expressed by their living practices, and these practices are best captured through cultural mapping.

Anthropological fieldwork: Tal Berman (2017), in his PhD thesis, recommends adopting anthropological fieldwork as an important method to capture local knowledge, especially tacit knowledge, which is generally not articulated well, through public participation processes to inform planning policies and practices. While that is quite possible, this thesis works on the premise that there is value in engaging with the community, even if there is a need to educate them and provoke consciousness where necessary, because without a ‘buy-in’ from the community, one cannot expect them to fully and wholeheartedly adopt practices that have no meaning for them, especially when it comes to making difficult choices that might hinder current lifestyles but are beneficial for the larger community and future.

Principles of scientific management: Frederick Winslow Taylor (1911) saw technical calculation as superior to human judgement. He believed that humans could not be trusted because they are plagued by laxity, ambiguity and unnecessary complexity. For him, that which cannot be measured either does not exist or has no value. He measured by universal

units of science, not by specifics of craft, person or place (in the book *Code of the City*). This research opposes such dismissive approaches as those held by Taylor, and maintains that while universal units of science help to assess a situation or fact, human emotions, feelings and judgements that come out of ‘hard to evaluate’, ‘intuitive’ and ‘intangible but real enough’ views are equally important in the way a society and its built environment are structured, if not more.

Some other similar approaches have also been considered, particularly the methods and methodology used in various studies, such as measuring oppressive qualities of streetscapes using digital simulations, mathematical calculations and formulas (Asgarzadeh et al. 2012); studying the environmental quality of residential neighbourhoods and its impact on liveability (Norouzian-Maleki et al. 2015) by using Delphi survey methods;¹⁴ measuring sense of community between gated and non-gated residential neighbourhoods (Sakip, Johari and Salleh 2012) using face-to-face interview methods; quantitative research investigating the sense of belonging in housing-related environments (Ng, Kam and Pong 2005); evaluating inclusivity and positivity in informal social spaces and settings (Aelbrecht 2009, 2010, 2016), using a combination of empirical fieldwork, observations, ethnographic interviews, spatial analysis and body language; exploring the relationship between lively streets and social behaviour (Mehta 2006, 2007) using mixed methods like direct observation of streets, photographs, pedestrian counts, surveys and interviews; researching ‘soft edges’ of residential streets (Gehl 1986, 1980; Gehl et al. 1977; Gehl and Svarre 2013a) through surveys, observations, spatial analysis and their correlations; investigating resident views of neighbourhoods (Talen and Shah 2007) using geographic information systems (GIS), allowing for multiple layers of information to be analysed more efficiently; and finally evaluating ‘social value’ of case buildings (Watson et al. 2016) using the social impact valuation methodology social return on investment (SROI).

While Asgarzadeh’s (2012) tactic could have been an apt approach for this research, this method of using specially designed digital tools to engage with the community could not be adopted because of the lack of funds and difficulty in finding enough cohorts who would be capable of using high-end digital tools. Similarly, Sakip et al.’s (2012) and Ng

¹⁴ In Delphi survey methods, there are many rounds of investigating questions that are sent out to a group of experts and their anonymous responses are discussed with the panel after each round, as a whole, to come to precise conclusions. This narrows down the ‘what should be’ action plan.

et al.'s (2005) methods of measuring people's aspirations and sense of belonging also could be another useful methodology, but the process is insufficient for addressing all the research questions of this study. Hence, although the core method of conducting face-to-face interviews has been adopted for this research, this research relies more on semi-structured qualitative analytical frameworks than quantitative means.

Other methods adopted by Gehl (1977, 1980, 1986) and Talen (2007) have overlapping research areas; however, the data collected are very differently, and hence, the type of data collected is not relevant to this study. Gehl's research directly maps how people use/move in their streets or neighbourhoods, whereas Talen's research conducts surveys to collect data and uses a GIS tool for analysing that data. In contrast, this research explores people's sentiments both in retrospection and aspirations, layered with their ways of engaging with other stakeholders who influence the future of local character. 'Touchy-feely' data, which could be loaded with emotions, are complex, and analysing these data using GIS or other digital tools would be ineffective. Hence, the methods adopted by Gehl and Talen were considered inappropriate for this research.

The phase-wise research approach (Mehta 2006, 2007) and mixed-methods approach (Aelbrecht 2009, 2010, 2016), with semi-structured interviews; field observations; and empirical data collected from government archives, media, public libraries and official documents such as minutes of public meetings, development plans and government reports are more appropriate for this research, and hence, these are the methods that have been adopted.

Based on the many relevant studies conducted, evaluating their methods and methodologies, and analysing the limitations and challenges of applying those methods in this research, the research adopts the most appropriate methods applicable to this type of study, which are described in detail in the next section.

6.4 Research Tactics

Responding to the gaps identified in the literature review (Chapters 2, 3 and 4) and in the context of the bioregion of Willunga Basin (Chapter 5), a mixed-methods approach is adopted for this study to include anecdotal evidence from semi-structured interviews of local residents/professionals along with empirical data collected from archives, media articles, local government documents, development plans, development applications submitted to governing bodies and government reports. Information has been gathered through the review of relevant literature, physical observation and informal engagements, archival investigations, close reading of policy and regulatory documents, semi-structured interviews, and social media communications.

Research has been conducted in three main stages as described below:

Stage 1—Literature review and establishing theoretical frameworks: The first stage of the research reviews/critiques existing literature on the concepts of bioregionalism; historic patterns of urban development; current trends in urban fringe development; policies and regulations around development; and, most importantly, community interest/participation in the development of their local built environment, particularly related to architectural typologies and urban design elements.

Stage 2—Conducting the research: The second stage of the research involved collecting relevant data. The following types of data have been collected:

1. regulatory documents: reports, policy documents and development plans, specific to fringe development policies, urban growth boundaries, fringe towns/neighbourhoods, streetscapes and built forms
2. public consultation documents: minutes of the meetings of various community groups and their representation in the development plan amendment consultation meetings held by local governing bodies (Onkaparinga Council)
3. interviews with a range of professionals, residents of the region and local community groups to understand the role and impact of certain developments in the region, developments which fall within certain zones/boundaries but are perceived to affect the overall ‘look and feel’ of the region, contributing to/changing the identity of the region

4. case studies, including where possible collection of original development applications, modifications to applications based on feedback from planning authorities, public notification documents, minutes of the meetings and final DNFs.

Further, this stage of research has been divided into four substages as below:

Stage 2a—Pilot study of the region: The researcher visited the region on many occasions, spending time at the local fairs, markets, libraries and shops/local businesses, and engaging with the community. Informal discussions with some of the residents and businesses provided important clues on the general sentiment of people towards urbanisation, where strong voices were encountered and projects to study in detail were suggested. This led to choosing five main projects for in-depth case study.

Stage 2b—Collecting official/archival documents: While doing the pilot study of the region, the researcher also collected the following:

1. archival documents from the local libraries, Aldinga Library, Willunga Library and Noarlunga Library
2. archival maps and documents from the State Library of South Australia
3. regulatory documents from Onkaparinga Council, such as development plans, and amendments to development plans, from the late 1900s to 2015
4. media articles about the region and various development projects.

Stage 2c—Advertising, recruiting and conducting semi-structured interviews: The investigation was considered low risk, and an application was sought from the University's Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) for ethics approval to conduct the ethnographic stage of the research. Once the approval was obtained (HREC approval number H-20170031), flyers were dropped in the letterboxes of almost 60% of the houses in Aldinga, Aldinga Beach, Willunga, Port Willunga and McLaren Vale. Notices were also displayed in local shops, libraries, businesses, and services. Doing the letterbox drops personally by foot gave the researcher an opportunity to explore and observe the neighbourhoods in close detail. Meticulous field notes were prepared, and the streets/neighbourhoods were photographed whenever possible.

Thirty people responded to the flyers/notices, of whom 24 agreed to a semi-structured interview. These participants included two groups (as group interviews), four professionals who had directly or indirectly worked with the local government on development projects, and three representatives of local community groups. The remainder of the respondents were local residents and local small business owners.

Most of the interviews were scheduled and conducted in the meeting rooms of local libraries at Aldinga and Willunga. All of the respondents signed a consent form indicating they did not object to be named and did not object for the interview to be audio recorded. However, for ease of referencing within the thesis all the respondents were given a code, which is a sequential alphanumeric value starting from RC01, RC02, RC03.... to RC24. Most of the respondents were community members who live within Willunga Basin. But two of the significant respondents – Iris Iwanicki and Stephanie Johnston, who are also urban planners have been referenced by name while quoting their remarks in the thesis, with their consent.

During the interviews, many of the respondents mentioned Facebook as a popular medium for group discussions by local community members. Hence, further approval was sought from the HREC to gather data from social media. Approval was given with the condition that all identifiers, such as profile pictures and names, would be removed from the data. This widened the reach, and much more data were collected, which might not have been obtained otherwise. Quotations from social media, by people who were not already interviewed in person, have been referenced with codes SM01, SM02, SM03 and so on. Quotes from social media group members who were also interview respondents, are referenced with the respondents' RC code number.

Stage 2d—Case studies: This involved collection of development applications; minutes of meetings, media coverage, final approvals (DNFs); and evidence of negotiations between planning authorities, local communities and developers for the following projects:

- OTR on Port Road, completed about a year (2012) before this research began— opportunity to document the most recent process of development application, approvals and community engagement.

- Sunday Estate, completed a decade (early 2000s) before this research began—opportunity to observe its broader impact on the community and ecology.
- Willunga Garden village, completed two decades ago (1990s)—opportunity to share the living experiences of an intentional community living in a ‘open’ neighbourhood.
- Aldi on Port Road, development in progress while the research was being conducted—opportunity to observe and analyse the processes.
- Willunga High Street upgrade, development in progress while the research was being conducted—opportunity to document the process of community engagement and outcomes of a public space upgrade project, a decade in the making.
- Latitude 4/5 storey building, the first multi-storey building proposal in the region—opportunity to observe firsthand community participation and its impact on the project proposal.



Figure 6.2: Case studies marked on image
(Google Maps)

Stage 3—Analysis and correlating data: This is the final stage of the research, where all of the interviews have been transcribed, textually coded and correlated with all other data. A qualitative analytical framework has been developed to rate the success of urban development proposals. This framework has been adapted from Lasso's (1986) work on rating hospitals. The case studies are assigned a relevant value based on various factors, including quality of the proposal; community interest in the project; level of complexity of community engagement; and changes that were made to the original development application/proposal to the final outcome, which could be the result of community sentiments and their modes of activism. This analytical framework developed specifically for this research is explained in more detail in the last section of this chapter.

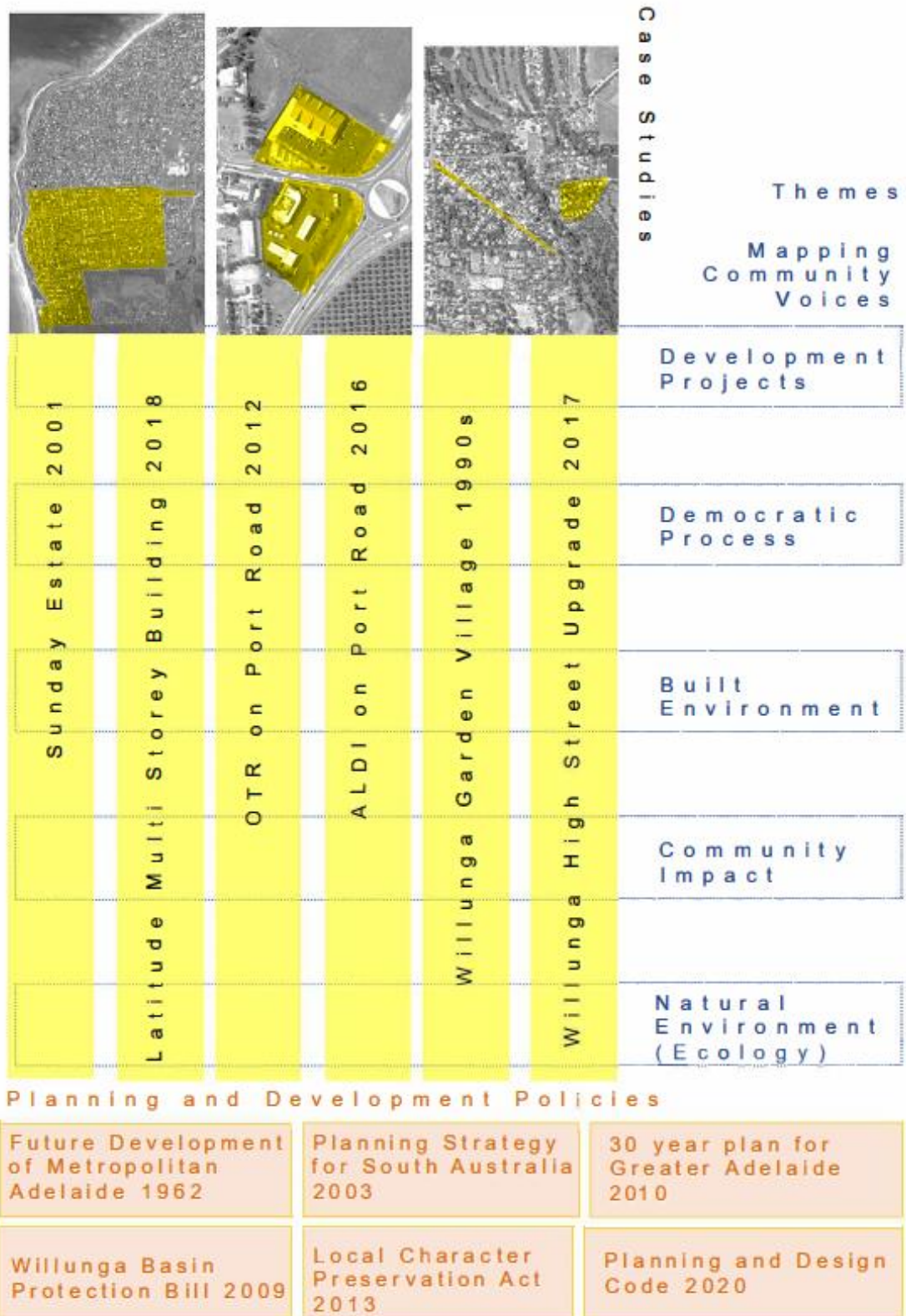


Figure 6.3: Research themes, case studies and policy documents

Table 6.1 provides a summary of the type of data collected, reasons, theories behind it and how the data have been collected.

Table 6.1: Data types, reasons for collection and collection methods

What data are needed?	Where do these data come from?	What will these data inform?	Data type	Why are these data needed?
Data type	Source	Information	Data coding	Concept
Regulation/ Code/ Act/ Development policy	Development Plan Amendments/Plan Amendment Report	What regulation is in place/proposed	Official text	To understand which aspects of the society and the built environment the governing bodies want to control/direct
Democratic process/Public discourse	Consultation ads for Development Amendments or Development Applications (small ads in the papers) Consultation hearing minutes Development assessment hearing Interviews	What amendments were proposed What did the public say Who/Which bodies represented the public and what further decisions were taken based on the hearings Where building applications were represented against	Dates of hearing Names of people/organisations What people said	Public consultation and public participation are important in guiding future development—unless there is interest and action from ground up (grassroots), visions of a better future cannot be achieved
Built environment	Interviews On-site observation	What kind of neighbourhoods suit the region What are the local architectural identities	Anecdotes Photographs Architectural styles Streetscapes	Developers tend to apply cookie-cutter type of neighbourhood layouts, while local communities would prefer to see development that is in line with the bioregion’s identities, lifestyle practices and sentiments

What data are needed?	Where do these data come from?	What will these data inform? Data type	Why are these data needed?	
Data type	Source	Information	Data coding	Concept
Community sentiments	Interviews with local residents and professionals	Activists opinions, their strategies, their actions and achieved/implied results	Interview text— sentiments, opinions, anecdotes	What people think and feel—assuming that official minutes of meetings do not necessarily express all sentiments of those concerned
Ecological impacts	Interviews with local residents and professionals Government reports	Negative or positive impacts on local ecosystems— perceived and factual	Interview text— sentiments, opinions, anecdotes Official text	General opinion is that development always harms natural environment, but with careful planning and good local knowledge, developments can improve local ecosystems, especially where it matters
Specific case studies	Development Applications for specific projects Media articles Semi-structured interviews	Initial designs by developers Public consultation responses Subsequent changes implemented for the project	Official text Drawings Photographs People’s sentiments	An in-depth investigation of the theories and anecdotes to provide a descriptive, in-context and exploratory analysis

6.4.1 Literature Research

The literature review, Part One of this research, serves two purposes—review of existing literature to find the gaps in the three main themes of ‘socio-cultural aspects of urbanisation’, ‘participatory approaches for urban development’ and ‘bioregional urbanism’, and to derive a framework for the research design and methodology. Findings of the literature review on how urban development is practised in reality, particularly in relation to desired character, local character and character preservation, suggest that the current public participation/community engagement practices need to be improved by using modern technologies and visual simulation systems. This research embarks on testing this theory in Willunga Basin to investigate these gaps in the practice of community engagement by looking at specific case studies and conducting semi-structured interviews. From the findings of the literature on bioregional urbanism, this research also explores the notion of bioregionalism embraced in the policy documents and among the community members. Thus, the literature research lays a good foundation for further data collection and analysis in order to answer the research sub-questions 2 and 3.

6.4.2 Interpretive Historical and Correlational Research

For achievement of the first objective of the research—to explore policies and regulations governing development at the urban fringe—interpretive historical and correlational research methods are adopted. This includes collecting relevant archival documents and current/historical regulatory instruments from local libraries, government archives and government agencies, specific to the bioregion being studied—Willunga Basin.

The following documents were analysed for the research:

- Willunga DC Development Plans from 1996 to 2002 from the DPTI, digital format—15 files
- Onkaparinga City Development Plans from 2002 to 2015 from Onkaparinga Council office, digital format—39 files
- Council Development Plan Amendment Register from the DPTI from 1986 onwards, pdf file
- *Metropolitan Adelaide Planning Study*, book, 1977
- *Report on the Metropolitan Area of Adelaide*, book, 1962.

6.4.3 Mapping Community Voices

This part of the research focused on collecting community voices as expressed formally and informally over matters of development of the built environment in the bioregion Willunga Basin. Two methods were adopted for achieving the second and third objective of the research. First, minutes of meetings were examined, as recorded by the local governing agencies regarding matters of specific development projects and by attending planning meetings held by the council, not necessarily for the said projects, but with the intention to note modes of engagement between the authorities and community members. Second, community voices were gathered by conducting semi-structured interviews with members of the local community.

This research also explored the presence of various community groups, and their engagement strategies with the community and authorities, in relation to urban development policies and plans, action plans and ideologies for retaining/developing their natural/built environment. Willunga Basin has 21 different community groups with different agendas, targeting members from specific townships/neighbourhoods. However, it has been noted that when required, they come together to form an alliance to voice their opinions as one group, and hence, the research collectively mentions them as ‘local community’ or ‘community members’, and where contact details were available, they were all invited to participate in the semi-structured interviews.

To answer in part the main research question and the secondary questions, a set of semi-structured interviews were conducted. Semi-structured interviews are chosen to discover the perceptions of members of the local community around their understanding of urbanisation trends in the basin, as well as their aspirations for the future of their bioregion. Interviews are valuable because they provide a deeper knowledge of socio-cultural aspects by showcasing the community’s viewpoints (Kvale 2009; Roulston 2010; Wengraf 2001).

The interview questions were framed to cover the following topics: (1) important urban development projects (as per their understanding), (2) democratic process of engagement with urban development projects, (3) built environment, (4) community impact and (5) ecology. Details of the questions are attached as Appendix 4, and the voices collected from these interviews are discussed in Chapter 7 under ‘Mapping Community Voices’.

Table 6.2: Summary of interview questions

Semi-structured interview questions	
1. Major Development Projects	
a. In your experience, in the time you have spent here, what significant developments have you seen?	
b. Why do you perceive these to be significant developments?	
2. Democratic Process	
a. How did you get to know about the projects?	
b. What was your level of participation during (and after) the public consultation period?	
3. Built Environment	
a. Describe local character in terms of architecture, especially building frontages and streetscapes.	
b. What type of development would you like to see in this region?	
4. Community Impact	
a. What does community mean to you? What brings the community together?	
b. What kind of impact did (or will) the above project(s) have on you, your family and your friends?	
5. Ecology	
a. Explain the characteristics of local ecology.	
b. What changes have you observed during your time here?	

Social media provides an excellent opportunity to gather data specific to events and topics, within a target group. While social media research is continuously evolving, with sophisticated data extraction methods, this research uses simple techniques, such as joining a closed group, introducing and declaring the intention, asking questions (similar to the ones used in semi-structured interviews), and observing discussions around the relevant topics, in particular the case study projects.

At the time of conducting this research, the local community was using Facebook closed/private groups as a means of interaction among themselves. The research questions were posted on the private Facebook group called 'Aldinga and Surrounds Community Forum', with 6800 members. However, it was observed that when a new 'point of contention' was discovered, a new subsidiary group would be formed. For example, 'NO 5 and 4 storey apartment in Aldinga Beach' was a Facebook group created just to discuss

everything related to the new mixed-use development application submitted (case study number 6).

6.4.4 Case Studies

There are many apprehensions towards adopting ‘case studies’ as the primary methodology of research. However, Bent Flyvbjerg writes extensively and argues in much detail about the usefulness of a case study approach, especially in studies where social science and urban environments converge (Flyvbjerg 2011, 2006).

On the basis of the findings from the pilot study, the following projects were chosen as case studies for intensive analysis of the role of community voice in shaping the urban environments that the community inhabits. The projects have been carefully chosen to ensure variety in the type of development and across a timeline to capture the change (if any) in process, sentiments and expectations of the local community (see Figure 6.2 and Table 6.3):

1. OTR on Port Road
2. Sunday Estate
3. Willunga Garden Village
4. Aldi on Port Road
5. Willunga High Street upgrade
6. Latitude 4/5 storey building.

Table 6.3: Research case studies

Chosen project	Year of completion	Project details	Reason for choosing this project
OTR on Port Road	2012	Upgrade of an old defunct fuel station	Opportunity to document the most recent process of approvals and community engagement of a recently completed project
Sunday Estate	2001	Recent large-scale housing development (150 houses), which ran into lots of controversies	Opportunity to observe its broader impact on the community and ecology
Willunga Garden Village	1990s	Unique small-scale housing development (20 houses) aimed at	Opportunity to share the lived experiences of an intentional community

Chosen project	Year of completion	Project details	Reason for choosing this project
Aldi on Port Road	2016–18	like-minded community to practise permaculture Commercial development at Aldinga	living in an ‘open’ neighbourhood Development in progress while the research was being conducted Opportunity to observe and analyse the immediate social and cultural context
Willunga High Street upgrade	2016–18	Local government project to upgrade the main street of Willunga township	Opportunity to document the process of community engagement and outcomes—a public space upgrade project, a decade in the making
Latitude 4/5-storey building	Development Application being assessed in progress	The first multi-storey building proposal in the region Application submitted to the State Commission Assessment Panel—opposed by local government	Opportunity to observe firsthand, community participation and its impact on project proposal iterations and analyse the immediate social and cultural context

Other projects considered for this study, but lightly touched upon for the purpose of this study are as follows:

1. ‘the cube’—d’Arenberg Wine Information Centre
2. Nan Hai Pu Tuo Temple of Australia
3. Aldinga Arts Ecovillage
4. McLaren Vale overpass
5. Onkaparinga Wastewater Treatment Plant
6. Aldinga District Centre
7. Aldinga Township Streetscape upgrade

6.5 Analytical Framework and Tools

Case studies form the bulk of this research. However, data from the interview respondents; minutes of meetings; attendance of researcher in council planning meetings; and observation of community voices in the meetings, on social media and in newspapers all contribute to valuable data. All of these data are analysed using an analytical framework developed

especially for this research; however, it has parallels with the qualitative analytical methods proposed by Lasso (1986). Two tools are applied for analysing the findings – Four Quadrant Analytical Tool to evaluate the success of the selected case studies and Pie Charts to depict the level of engagement by the three main stakeholder groups.

In order to evaluate the success of the case study projects, original development proposals are compared against the outcome and a success rate value is assigned based on how different the final outcome is from the original proposal. Usually rates of success of a project can easily be assigned values, either a numerical value on a sliding scale (e.g. 1–10) or a qualitative scale (e.g. from low to high), and can easily be mapped on a one-dimensional linear scale. However, the intention of this research is to not be limited by one variable but to explore the various aspects of the bioregional urbanism principles, particularly for community engagement practices and desired character of architectural elements. Hence, a Four Quadrant Chart has been adopted for analysing data of this research (see Figure 6.3).

Secondary questions of the research initiate development of this quadrant chart based on the analytical framework. The questions are as follows: What changes can be observed from the original proposal to the final outcome? What was the contribution of the community in bringing about this change? What tools were used to voice these changes? These questions prompt the researcher to investigate further into other forms of analytical framework that move away from the linear sliding scale approach, and the quadrant approach to analyse the data is deemed suitable for this research. The secondary questions trigger the selection of two variables: ‘quality of proposal’ and ‘community interest’.

The first variable, ‘quality of proposal’, assesses the changes that can be noted in the final development, particularly in terms of architectural and urban elements, on a scale that ranges from low to high. The second variable, ‘community interest’, assesses the contribution of the community in bringing about the changes in the outcome and the severity of the tools of engagement by assigning values on a scale ranging from low to high.

Thus, in summary, the success of a development proposal is evaluated according to the following steps:

1. Quality of proposal is evaluated on the basis of how different the final outcome is from the original proposal, in terms of architectural elements and design of the proposal. If the final outcome has many changes compared with the original

proposal, then the quality of proposal is considered low. If the final outcome is not very different from the original proposal, then the quality of proposal is considered high. The changes could be triggered by any other factor, including community engagement, expert evaluations, changes to policies, financial constraints and feedback from approving authorities.

2. Community interest is evaluated on the basis of how engaged the community is in influencing the outcome. If the engagement was high according to the activities and tools of engagement (e.g. if there are a high number of representations, above 25, provision of detailed critique and suggestions to improve the proposal, high visibility in the media, long social media discussions and filing petitions at the Environment, Resources and Development Court¹⁵ [ERD Court]), then it is considered that the community interest is high.

This risk of using this method of analysis and assigning one-dimensional values of low–high is that it is challenging to accurately measure ‘low interest’. This method does not assess whether or not the community thinks that a particular proposal would not matter much, and hence displays low interest, or if the proposal was in fact in line with their aspirations for the future of the bioregion, and hence also displays low interest. This risk is mitigated to some extent by carefully choosing the case studies. For example, ‘the cube’ project was abandoned assuming low interest from the community was due to the fact that the building was not really visible from any residential neighbourhoods or town/district centres of Willunga or Aldinga, and ‘Aldinga Arts Eco Village’ was abandoned because a similar neighbourhood development was already selected, which presumably aligned very well with the community aspirations.

Success of a proposal is assigned one of four measures, each represented by a quadrant: ‘easy win’, ‘average’, ‘questionable’ and ‘highly contested’. This is based on deeply analysing the process and level of difficulty of the process of approval from proposal to final outcome. The two different variables are applied to analyse the success of the proposals: ‘quality of the proposal’ and ‘community interest in the proposal’. Original proposals are assigned one of the qualities —‘good’, ‘average’ or ‘devious’—according to the success of

¹⁵ ERD court in its jurisdiction of Development Act 1993 and ERD Act 1993, resolved conflicts around Development Applications (DA) by conducting independent assessment of the application against relevant planning policies. In the recent PDI 2016 Act, the above Acts have been repealed and the rights to appeal, particularly by third parties have been significantly reduced.

the proposal, and the amount of ‘activism’ or community engagement tools employed by the community. Under the theme of ‘community interest’, the quality of a proposal is measured against three values: ‘doesn’t matter’, ‘aligns with the community aspirations’ and ‘high interest’. As a final step, by mapping both aspects as variables in this four quadrant chart, it is expected that a high quality of analytical result will be achieved, which gives us a more holistic understanding of the workings of a ‘conscious community’ in directing sustainable development of their bioregion.



Figure 6.4: Quadrant chart to measure proposal success

Table 6.4 depicts all the elements against which each proposal is assessed. According to the findings, each proposal is assigned a ‘Type’ and conclusions will be drawn from that.

Table 6.4: Assessment criteria of each proposal

Rate of success	Quality of proposal	Community interest	Criteria for rate of success
Win-win	Good	Low	No/minor changes to the proposal Aligns with political intent and community aspirations
Average (does not affect overall intentions)	Average	Medium	Acceptable levels of changes Largely aligns with community aspirations
Highly contested	Low, manipulative and devious	High	Major changes to proposal High levels of frustrations expressed by community
Questionable (undetermined)	Undetermined	Low	No process or method to assess what prompted the change

A second analytical tool that is adapted for this thesis is to plot the level of stakeholder engagement in a Pie Chart. Three main stakeholder groups have been mapped in the pie chart – Community, Developers and approving Authorities (either DPTI, Local Council, DAC or SCAP). Each stakeholder group is assigned values based on level of engagement demonstrated by the group. Level of engagement by local community is valued based on grassroots activism demonstrated by the local members of the community in Willunga Basin. The developers’ level of engagement is valued based on their willingness to work cohesively with the community, how they interpret local character outside of legislated development plans, and what methods they apply to justify their designs / development proposals. The level of engagement of the approving authorities is valued based on their initiatives to go over and above the mandatory legislated public notifications and truly engage with the community.

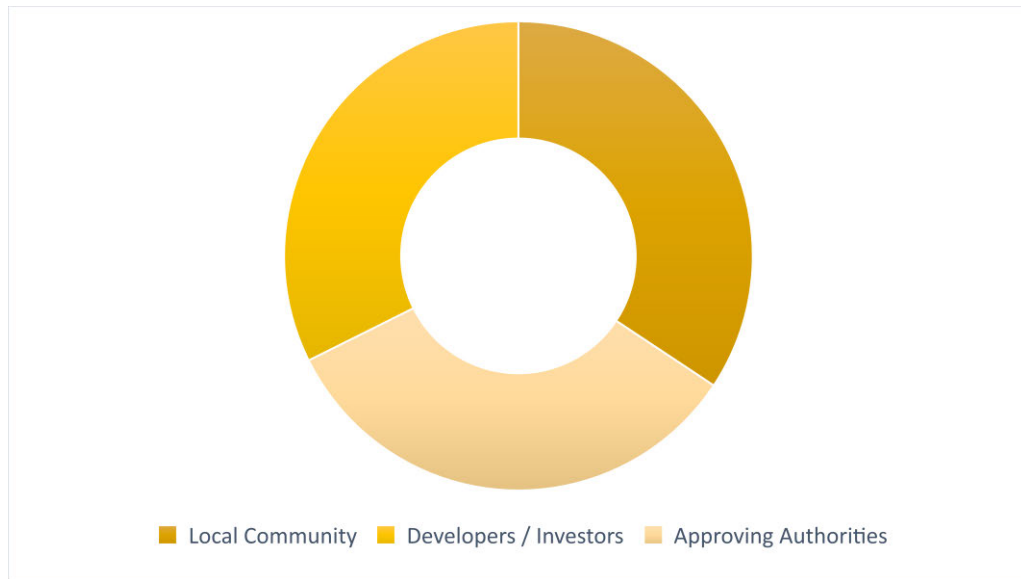


Figure 6.5: Pie chart to measure levels of engagement by each stakeholder group

In an ideal situation, the level of engagement is shared equally by all three stakeholder groups, each group makes up for a third of the pie chart as a starting point (Figure 6.5). For each case study additional scores are given to a stakeholder group where there is noticeable engagement from the group, or scores are taken away where there is noticeable apathy towards engaging meaningfully with the other stakeholders. The change in the pie chart then depicts visually a comparative level of engagement by each stakeholder for each case study in Chapter 7. In conclusion, an aggregated pie chart (in Chapter 8) is prepared by combining all the values of the individual case studies. This aggregated chart is then compared against a similar chart prepared based on responses from semi-structured interviews. This comparison demonstrates and assists in discussing the level of consciousness and bioregional understanding of local character that has been observed in this study of the Basin – as perceived by the interview cohorts vs collected data in the case studies.

Part Three

Findings and Analysis

Most of the global population now lives in metropolitan regions, and the metropolitan trend is still continuing. There is not only increasing dissatisfaction with our cities, but also an awareness that it is possible to make them more delightful and more efficient places in which to live and work.

(Lynch and Rodwin, *A Theory of Urban Form*, 1958, p. 202)

The South Australian Government has a target of increasing the state's population to 2 million by 2050. In response, the City of Onkaparinga has determined a need for an additional 20,000 dwellings to increase the population by 40,000 residents within the local council area. Within Willunga Basin, this translates to an increase of population by 7,000 (from 25,000 to 33,000, approximately), increasing the housing stock by 3,500 residences by 2036. This projection recognises the limitations of land supply, restrained by the urban growth boundary, greenfield supply and *Character Preservation Act*. While the numbers may not sound high, for a region recognised for 'rural' character, where the local communities resist urbanisation, this is a substantial increase and cause for concern.

The local community proudly assert that they have played a significant role, either through activism or by means of legislated consultation representations, in framing the development plan policy that is currently being followed by the City of Onkaparinga. Willunga Basin, a separate district until 1962, was absorbed into the larger metropolitan Adelaide boundary on the basis of a comprehensive strategic planning report spearheaded by Stuart Hart, the town planner for Adelaide. Since then, the community has played a significant role in supporting and pioneering many 'first of their kind in Australia' initiatives, such as Hills Face Zone, integrated water resource legislation, urban growth boundary, character preservation legislation and environment and food production area legislation.

The following chapters analyse the findings of the case studies and semi-structured interviews (Chapter 7), unpack the findings in the context of local character in Willunga Basin (Chapter 8), and finally conclude on how the gap between theoretical ideals of bioregionalism and the practice of urban development at the fringe could be addressed (Chapter 9).

Chapter 7: Defending Local Character in Willunga Basin

This Chapter discusses the data collected and the story the data tells in order to answer the three secondary research questions:

1. How is local character recognised in urban development policies and what instruments are in place to retain it in the context of development pressure and potential conflicts at the rural–urban fringe?
2. What are the benefits and limitations of public participation tools and tactics currently in use in the Willunga Basin to mediate the interpretation of urban development policies in practice by local communities (bottom-up) as well as responsible authorities (top-down)?
3. What is the impact of the local community’s consciousness and engagement on the changing architectural and urban design norms of the region, and on its urban development policies more generally?

To answer the first question, the researcher conducted a literature review around the keywords ‘local character’, ‘neighbourhood character’, ‘regionalism’ and ‘desired character’. A close reading of Onkaparinga development plans past and present was also conducted to identify the instruments in place around recognising local character in Willunga Basin and the tools in place to promote or retain local character.

The second question called for in-depth study of regulatory documents around planning policies and development plans to assess the tools and tactics used by the local council to engage with the local community, as well as grassroots tactics employed by local communities to engage with the decision-makers and other stakeholders. This included close reading of the state’s urban and regional development Acts, development plans, amendments, social media discussions and archival documents; attending planning meetings; analysing minutes of meetings related to development approvals; face-to-face interactions with local community members; and examining media reports.

The third question has been addressed by studying six cases: urban projects ranging from housing layouts and streetscapes to retail outlets and a multi-storey building proposal, all based in Willunga Basin. The rationale behind the selection of these projects has been articulated in Chapter 6, section 6.4.4.

7.1 Planning and Development Strategies over the Years in Willunga Basin

This section discusses and analyses the various planning policies and development plans that have influenced the direction of settlement and urbanisation of areas within Willunga Basin—with the intent to understand the significance of ‘local character’ in the larger scheme of urban and regional development, and how it plays a part in finetuning the regulations and establishing specific legislative Acts to protect and retain that ‘local character’.

One of the earliest forms of local government was set up in 1853 to govern the Hundred of Willunga, covering most of the Willunga Basin, and was named the District Council of Willunga. Aldinga broke away and formed their own District Council of Aldinga in 1857, and was dissolved to be absorbed back into Willunga Council in 1932.

In South Australia, the *Town Planning Act 1929* introduced the Residential 2 zone, a policy that suggested development in low-density zones should primarily be of detached and semi-detached dwellings on individual plots, while medium-density zones allowed for row dwellings and residential flat buildings. Willunga Basin was considered a low-density zone and was not part of the Adelaide metropolitan area of the time.

In 1955, in accordance with the *Town Planning Act 1929*, the government appointed a Town Planning Committee to study and prepare a plan to indicate what metropolitan Adelaide should develop into in the future. Surveys, investigations and consultations were conducted, and the plan was presented to the parliament. In 1962, the South Australian Town Planning Committee (now Planning and Land Use Services) prepared a comprehensive report and planned for the future of the metropolitan area of Adelaide. It was concluded that the metropolitan city would grow outwards to the north and northeast and south along the coast to Sellicks Beach including Willunga Basin. A 30-year plan was prepared (1961–1991), and the metropolitan boundaries were expanded, assuming development of secondary business centres in the suburbs and continued spread of urban areas with improved infrastructure and public transport systems. The boundaries now included many districts around the city, and the District of Willunga (primarily Willunga Basin) was included in the metropolitan plan of the time. However, the plan recognised the need to retain certain rural regions and restricted urban development on steep land, thus restricting subdivisions in the Rural Zone,

Hills Face Zone, Country Living Zone and Country Township Zone. Land around Willunga township came into the fold of one of these zones. Much of the land along the coast was marked for average-density urban growth—this included land around Aldinga township. This led to the strategic plan that influenced the basin’s future development.



Figure 7.1: Map showing Greater Adelaide (yellow), Willunga Basin (white) and urban growth (orange) boundaries

Source: <https://location.sa.gov.au/viewer/>

In early 1994, under the ‘Building Better Cities’ program funded by the federal government, Willunga Council (District of Willunga) undertook a strategic planning process for the whole of the Willunga Basin area. Iris Iwanicki (RC01), urban and regional planner, was engaged to lead the investigations and engage with the local community. Details of the community engagement process are discussed later in the chapter. At this point, the Willunga Basin was governed by four local councils: District of Willunga, District of Noarlunga, District of

Happy Valley and District of Yankalilla.¹⁶ The strategic planning process was undertaken mainly to identify where in the bioregion urban development could be undertaken. There was pressure on the state from the federal government to increase the population from 7000 to 70,000, and the state viewed the Willunga Basin as a deferred urban region through suburbanisation of the land. Influenced heavily by McHarg's planning approach, land capability studies, landscape values and water sustainability principles, the council invested in an extensive investigation of the basin's mapping, soils, climate, rainfall and groundwater, along with socio-economic studies. Based on the findings, a Willunga Basin Planning Strategy document was prepared in consultation with all the four local councils, which primarily suggested containing urban development to the coastal area in the form of high-density 'nodal' villages and retaining/encouraging ongoing viticulture and horticultural activities through better water management programs. Most importantly, and relevant to this research, the planning strategy and the consequent amendment report—District Council of Willunga Interim Structure Plan—identified a rural conservation zone east of Main South Road and a historic Port Willunga/Aldinga Policy Area, with recommendations to further investigate for urban form or 'desired character'. Amalgamation of the councils into the City of Onkaparinga resulted in this strategic plan not being implemented; however, the report's recommendations for protection of rural land and water management strategies continued to be pursued by the local community and further developed into a separate legislation—*Character Preservation (McLaren Vale) Act 2012*.

In 2003, the planning strategy by the Department of Transport and Urban Planning continued to recognise the Willunga Basin as an important agricultural and viticultural resource, and plans to provide more reclaimed water to the region were prepared. The strategy also laid down some guidelines for the region's development 'to incorporate good design principles, to recognise coastal systems, natural landforms, townships and their contribution to urban character' (South Australia and Planning SA 2003). The strategy document states that the character of local areas is highly valued and people frequently expressed a need to 'belong' to an area and recognised that people are 'attracted to the notion of conserving the features of the built and natural environment that reflects the special character of their area'.

¹⁶ In 1998, Willunga, Happy Valley and Onkaparinga councils were amalgamated to form City of Onkaparinga, and currently, all of the geographical area of the Willunga Basin lies within the boundaries of City of Onkaparinga.

The 2004 Southern Metropolitan Growth Management Plan Amendment Report (PAR) created ‘deferred urban zones’ around Aldinga and Aldinga Beach. Although these areas were already earmarked for urban growth, sudden significant demand for residential growth was identified, and deferring urban growth released pressure on the existing infrastructure and services. This temporary planning control was introduced to ensure that population growth was in line with planned physical and social infrastructure provisions.

The 2006 Planning Strategy for Metropolitan Adelaide set the direction of development of the state over the next 10–15 years.

In 2008, the City of Onkaparinga undertook a growth strategy plan and introduced a balanced approach between broadacre and infill development, with medium-density housing in those areas that were already well serviced by public transport and open spaces. It was also anticipated that the planning reforms were being introduced to come into effect from 2021, and this growth strategy plan was to complement the expectations.

In 2009, a local minister of parliament, R. L. Brokenshire, proposed a Bill to protect the basin from heavy urban development, which was passed by the state parliament’s legislative council but opposed by the South Australian Government. The Bill was called the Willunga Basin Protection Bill. The aim of the Bill was to place landscape planning and governance into the hands of a committee of ‘outsider’ experts and ‘insider’ stakeholders, with decision-making powers based on a successful model protecting the Swan Valley region in Western Australia (Johnston 2009).

The Willunga Basin Protection Bill aimed to provide special planning and development procedures to protect the amenity of the basin and make related amendments to the *Development Act 1993*. The Bill enabled the establishment of a committee to provide advice to the minister, councils and the public about strategic planning and development in the basin and make recommendations to develop ‘the Basin Plan’. The committee was to have members that would truly represent the local community, and expertise in the matters of urban planning and development from various walks of life from food producers, local trade associations, Indigenous groups, viticulture groups, and heritage and local environmental groups. It was envisioned that the committee would be consulted on all development applications proposed within the basin and would align with the Basin Plan’s strategies and recommendations. When the Hon. R. L. Brokenshire introduced the Bill in the chambers, he

insisted that he represented the passion held by thousands of local people, who wished to ‘protect the basin from urban sprawl and blanket density living’, and to set aside the townships of McLaren Vale, McLaren Vale Flat, Aldinga, Willunga and Port Willunga as country townships to ensure orderly development rather than suburban style density development around those towns.¹⁷

The Bill was supposed to empower the consultative committee to prepare a plan for the basin that would have far greater force in law than a development plan. Although backed by the Upper House, the Bill was opposed by the South Australian Government on the grounds that it would give ‘responsibility for planning (and development) to a committee with no accountability’. Mr Brokenshire, who had introduced and argued on behalf of the Bill, maintained that this ‘would give decision making power and control of the future of the Willunga Basin back into the hands of people, and the government did not like that’ (*ABC News* 2011). The members of the local community group ‘Friends of Willunga Basin’ raised concerns that the Bill used words like ‘may, would, should’, which primarily meant ‘can, but doesn’t have to’, which in the legal world make it difficult to enforce. They recommended that words like ‘has to, have to, must’ should be used to make the Bill effective and enforceable, else there would be ‘loopholes’ for the developers to misuse the Bill (Robin 2010).

In 2010, the Minister for Urban and Regional Planning released a 30-year plan for Greater Adelaide, referring to ‘desired character’ statements. While heritage and character of a place had been recognised for a few decades, use of the term ‘desired character statements’ placed emphasis on a strategy to develop future character of a place to be similar to the present. This was seen to be ‘vitaly important’ in rural areas, with the assumption that these character statements will ‘guide sustainable management of regional centres and townships, protecting environmental, agricultural and tourism assets, while also conserving heritage areas’ (Department of Planning and Local Government 2010). While ‘character’ is invested in ‘value’ resulting from visual attributes, patterns and spatial definitions, desired character statements are tools for change management guiding the future development of place by providing ‘word pictures’ and ‘snap shots of future state’, ensuring that future character in

¹⁷ Attorney-General’s Department, South Australia. 2002. ‘Reading in the Chamber by Hon. R. L. Brokenshire—Willunga Basin Protection Bill’. <https://lawlex.com.au/tempstore/SA/Hansard/105812.htm>.

about 5–20 years is not a ‘re-statement of present character’ and focusing on ‘possibilities and not limitations’ and ‘identifying degree and type of change’.

In 2013, the *Local Character Preservation Act (McLaren Vale)* was introduced in conjunction with the *Local Character Preservation Act (Barossa)* to protect the special character of the region. Changes were made to the South Australian Planning Strategy and City of Onkaparinga Development Plan to protect the special areas for residential subdivision, safeguard valuable food production areas, conserve natural landscapes and environmental resources, and demarcate areas for residential growth. The primary aim of the legislation was to contain urban encroachment and protect vital food and agricultural land. On the basis of the review outcomes report, the local communities recommended retention of the legislation, adjustment of certain boundaries, creation of buffer areas, minimisation of policy conflicts, and provision of greater consistency and clarity of policy in the new planning and design code (‘the Code’). Livestock SA, an independent organisation, expressed concern that if agriculture did not remain profitable then it would be difficult to preserve the current character of the region; hence, they have urged for detailed assessment of the Acts on agriculture in particular. While this thesis focuses on the urban built character of the region, it is still important to note that the political intent to retain the cultural landscape character of the region is also riddled with conflicts and challenges. Submission to the review of impact of the Act also mentions that the boundaries of the Act did not really align with the council boundaries, and hence created confusion on what Acts are applicable where. This brings us back to the debate around complexities of having various boundaries, zones and policies for the same region, which in reality is viewed by the local communities as one bioregion.

The *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016* (PDI Act) established a new planning and development scheme and replaced the older *Development Act 1993*, providing a new development assessment system, an online ePlanning system, and a planning and design code that consolidates 72 development plans of the state, and setting up a new community engagement charter and a joint planning arrangement for all local governments. Emerging from the PDI Act is the Code, which is envisaged as a more efficient and useable planning system. However, while the Code proposes to provide a clear process for developers and landowners, and engagement is guided by the community engagement charter, it has not been viewed as a better or more efficient means to achieve the visions of the planning policies.

During the consultation period of the Code, the Friends of Willunga Basin submitted their views expressing concern that the Code does not truly reflect the ‘like for like’ transfer of the City of Onkaparinga’s current development plan, especially on the shift in policy towards introducing a second dwelling on an existing allotment—calling it a sneaky policy change that is not in the spirit of the character preservation legislation. In the same submission, they note with pride that the current development policy is ‘the result of many decades of activism’ and community engagement since the 1960s when the Hills Face Zone was introduced.

In summary, while there have been numerous attempts to translate the visions of a sustainable and human-centric planning practice that recognises and intends to retain ‘local character’, there are still many gaps that need to be addressed.

7.1.1 Desired Character Statement

From discussions in the previous chapters, particularly in Chapter 2, it is evident that the phrase ‘desired character’ is used quite loosely in the policy documents. This section discusses the use of this term, specifically in the policy documents that relate to the Willunga Basin, and the various ways in which it is stated in the policy documents and can be interpreted.

The Department of Planning and Local Government (2010) published a guide with regard to desired character statements, with the intention to assist and provide specific advice to planners, consultants and local councils on ‘where growth and change should occur, how areas could perform, what forms of housing and neighbourhoods could be created and provide clear direction about the future “look and feel” of areas’ (Department of Planning and Local Government 2010). This guide assists local governments in preparing their own ‘desired character statements’ to be included in the local development plans by listing a four-step process. The assumption is that the local councils use their knowledge and understanding of their bioregion and have a clear understanding of their strategic intent. The four steps are as follows: (1) reviewing the strategic intentions for the region, (2) gaining a good understanding of existing (local) character of the region, (3) reconciling strategic goals with existing (local) character and finally (4) drafting the statements. Figure 7.2 explains the various elements that influence the drafting of a desired character statement, with Step 2, understanding local character, being the most important component.

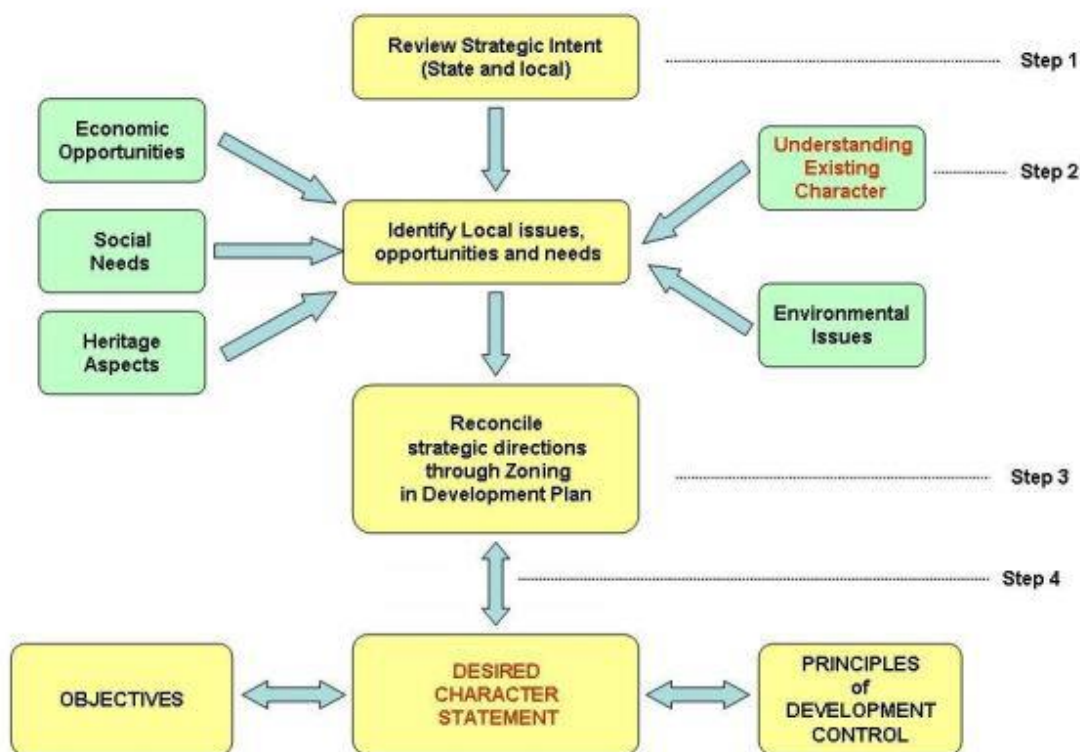


Figure 7.2: Elements influencing a desired character statement
(Source: Department of Planning and Local Government 2010)

Using these guidelines, which also include principles of development control, form and character, and land use and land division regulations, the local councils then prepare the desired character for each zone, policy area and precinct. In most cases, desired character statements are visionary statements open to interpretation. Some of the statements are stated below, followed by a critical analysis of the statements.

Willunga township falls under the residential policy area Historic Conservation Zone, and the desired character statement for this area is as follows: ‘a low density, low rise form mainly detached dwellings ranging from cottages to more substantial homes on generous allotments with high sense of landscaping’¹⁸.

Aldinga District Centre Policy Area’s desired character states that ‘the centre design and use of materials should be responsive to the coastal environment and complementary to the developing boulevard character of Aldinga Beach Road’ (City of Onkaparinga 2010).

¹⁸ Residential Infill and Desired Character - Development Plan Amendment; Development Act 1993. City of Onkaparinga. June 2009.

In the case of desired character of the Residential Infill Zone, the desired character statements become more specific, with tangible phrases being used. It is easy to design and assess tangible guides such as ‘open or low front fencing’, ‘windows and entrances oriented to public use spaces’, ‘street trees and planting strips’, ‘minimum setbacks’, ‘x dwellings per hectare’, ‘open upper level balconies can extend by one metre’ and ‘open verandas can extend two metres’, but the essence of why these guidelines/rules exist is lost if the thought and reasoning behind the guidelines are not explained clearly. On the other hand, when a desired character statement list consists of tangible items that are each backed with a rational expectation, it becomes easy to implement and assess. Some examples are as follows: ‘windows and entrances oriented to public use areas will provide opportunities for “eyes on the street”’, ‘open or low fencing will enhance community interaction opportunities’ and ‘street trees and planting strips will help buffer pedestrians from vehicle traffic and create a unifying theme’.

It is interesting to note that out of the 15 residential policy areas, only Willunga Policy Area has visual depictions of desired character, presumably because the community has presented itself as a very conscious community and engaged with policymakers for a long time. Excerpts from the development plan are shown in Figure 7.3.

- (b) not overwhelming the scale of historic development from a streetscape perspective. Where lengthy buildings are required, variations in the alignment and composition of front walls (articulation) should be included to break up the horizontal dimension and to create the appearance of a series of smaller frontages or building units as illustrated by the Figure below:

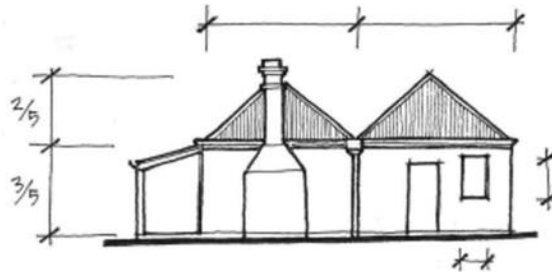


Where additional height is required, taller sections should be sited to the rear of premises, as illustrated by the Figure below, to maintain a perceived single storey appearance from street vantage points that is generally consistent with nearby historic development.



- (c) achieving the typical horizontal and vertical proportions of historic buildings, including, the proportion of wall height to roof height, the proportions of window and door openings, the ratio of openings to wall area and the height and span of verandas, and incorporating:

- (i) steep pitch roofs in the range of 30 to 45 degrees, but due to the short roof span distances, roof rise will be limited, breaking into 'M' shaped configurations or rear lean-to roofs for deeper buildings, as illustrated by the Figure below:



Observe proportions in traditional design.

Note:
Although steeply pitched, the height of roof is limited due to a short roof span distance.

- (ii) front verandas which serve as an important element in creating a mix of light and shade as well as balancing vertical scale.
- (iii) buildings that draw together a series of smaller elements to achieve overall size as opposed to large buildings designed as a homogenous mass.
- (iv) traditional approaches to proportioning to development across the whole of the policy area, with particular attention to infill development sited among neighbouring historic buildings.
- (d) limiting that the number and width of driveway crossovers and sited to avoid the need for street tree removal
- (e) utilising fencing to front property boundaries. Fencing styles should be consistent with historic themes, reverting to the simpler styles where contemporary development is involved eg post and wire, post and rail, picket or a low clipped hedge.

Figure 7.3: Excerpt from Onkaparinga Development Plan 2010, depicting the visual description of desired character for Willunga Residential Policy Area 63

Intangible guides for desired character may be problematic and open to interpretation and debate. Some of the intangible phrases used in the desired character statements and principles of development control are ‘visual interest’, ‘positive contribution to the public realm’ and ‘unifying theme that binds more diverse dwelling styles’.

To summarise, it is evident that although there is an intent to recognise local character and include that knowledge in desired character at the policymaking levels, the weakness of language makes it subjective and left to interpretation, which can be biased by many motives, thus making the practice of urban development very problematic. This is further identified and discussed in the upcoming chapters.

7.1.2 Urban Consolidation/Growth Boundary

A boundary line was drawn in this region in 1962, recognising the western side of Main South Road for future urban growth. This boundary line, however, has been much contested, moved, realigned, protested and negotiated.

The Supplementary Development Plan of 1988 envisaged a decline of population in the inner area and increase in population in the outer areas, and hence aimed to achieve a compact urban form to reduce demand for fringe growth, resulting in the growth of small urban pockets of settlements in the basin in the early 1990s. Despite the lack of infrastructure, land speculators who had bought land in the region started to call for urban development. Older owners of crop land who were facing retirement also were in favour of selling their land. However, the local community aspirations engaged with the state and worked towards setting up the strategic plan for Willunga, where the state agreed to view much of the Willunga region as deferred urban land.

In 2007, the state government announced that 400 ha of land on Bowering Hill was to be included in the urban growth boundary area. Most of the local communities—Friends of Port Willunga, Southern Eco Alliance, Aldinga Bay Residents Association and Aldinga Arts Eco Village—came together to form the Southern Coalition and protested against the realignment, claiming it would turn the region into just another ‘dormitory suburb’ (Rhiannon Hoyle n.d.). They argued that this was being planned without ensuring that services and transit infrastructure were in place, commuting from there for jobs already being very difficult. Bowering Hill was also regarded as a crucial rural buffer between suburbia and semi-rural edges of the metropolitan area. This realignment of the boundary was also

seen as a land grab by local community representatives (Rhiannon Hoyle n.d.). Then planning minister Paul Holloway argued that it should be deemed reserve land for housing to be developed over the next 15–20 years and not placed on the market straight away. On 27 July 2007, the newspaper the *Advertiser* reported this with the title ‘Residents Fear Urban Sprawl’. This reflects the sentiments expressed by the interview respondents and other media reports and overheard in the various planning commission meetings.

The recent decision (2018) to rezone 16 ha of land at How Road/Hart Road from deferred urban zone to residential zone to accommodate the growing population (by adding 250 new residences and up to 600 people) has met with an equal amount of critique and debate. Infrastructure needed to support this population growth includes further investment into the library, town square and main street; a new super school (under construction); extending the railway line from Seaford up to Aldinga (proposed); and duplication of South Road (almost complete). Of particular interest is the fact that this newly rezoned land abuts Aldinga Scrubland and primary production area, which are protected by the *McLaren Vale Character Preservation Act*. Hence, it would be interesting to note what kind of development will take place in this land, given that it is in close proximity to the district centre, but has a direct view of Willunga escarpment, the visual connection (figure 5.5) to which is held very dear by the local community.

The development plan amendment recognises the risk of urban development so close to ecological, natural and scenic importance and acknowledges the need for urban development to be carefully designed. However, the policy/guideline does not elaborate on what should be achieved or provide any specific guidelines to mitigate the risk apart from designating a buffer of approximately 100 metres between the scrubland and the future development and an even smaller buffer between the site and the primary production area. As will be seen in the case of Sunday Estate, it is indeed possible to protect and enhance the natural environment with careful planning, and it is hoped that the community engagement and early investigations will consider the fragile nature of this development and plan accordingly. However, the community concerns of loss of Aldinga’s rural character are not being addressed in the development plan amendment, apart from including the following items in the desired character statement for this policy area: ‘development fronting the interface areas to be of low density, single storey dwelling designed to respond to the environmental and topographical features of the adjoining natural and rural landscape.’ As will be noted in the case of Aldi, statements like ‘designed to respond’ are open to interpretation and can be

construed in various ways by developers and designers, with few opportunities for the approving authorities to demand better design. This in turn leaves the onus on the community itself to raise strong voices and turn to activism to achieve their goals.

7.2 The Practice of Public Consultation

This section discusses in detail the practice of public participation or community engagement as expressed by the interview cohorts as well as minutes of meetings, archival documents and social media posts/responses.

Iris Iwanicki (RC01), urban and regional planner and one of the interview respondents, led the community consultation process under the ‘better cities’¹⁹ program in 1994 to prepare the Willunga Basin Planning Strategy. A peer reference group made up of local residents based on their expertise or their interests was set up. The group constituted academics, winemakers, grape growers, developers and local heritage experts. She notes that there was a conflict in the group. Local politicians and barley growers were ‘pro development’, while the winemakers and grape growers were ‘anti-development’—which led to a very large debate within the community. The ‘better cities’ funding went towards a very intensive public consultation program. The reference group met every month; they were being updated by the investigations being carried out and the group debated on many of the issues. An external consultant was also hired to conduct eight public meetings in various locations around the basin. There were multiple interest groups and everyone in the basin was sent flyers outlining the planning process. Iwanicki was surprised at the number of professionals in the community, mainly retired people who had chosen to live here, driven by their love for the region. This also meant that there were strong and passionate opinions expressed in the meetings. The community remained closely involved through the process for the whole 3 years. One of the councillors was very hopeful of the outcomes and wanted to present the case of Willunga at a global forum in Manchester about ecological footprints. People who were pro development and wanted more subdivisions in McLaren Vale township to expand, with hobby farms forming a buffer, called Iwanicki a ‘greenie’. It was probably meant to be a derogatory term, but Iwanicki maintained that she did not mind and, in fact, saw it as a compliment, and maintained a professional demeanour. Iwanicki also pushed for an

¹⁹ The Building Better Cities Program was initiated by the Federal Government in 1991. The State and Territory Governments agreed to focus on improving urban development processes in order to improve quality of urban life. The program aimed at co-ordination within and between various levels of government including local councils.

economic study to be conducted for the basin to complement the planning strategy investigations. Although the Willunga Basin Planning Strategy 1994 laid a good foundation for water management strategies by setting up local waste water treatment plants that supply water to the vineyards and winemakers, it is disappointing that the urban form reticulation did not go ahead for want of funds. As Iwanicki said, ‘had there been more support, the Willunga Basin urban realm fringe could have actually been a world leader with good urban design for high density living. If done in the right spirit, high density living in the Willunga Basin could actually work, if it is well designed with good urban space to compensate for the lack of popular large backyard, especially with views to the coast and views to the escarpment’ (RC01).

Interestingly, when a group of artists approached Iwanicki to set up an artist village, Iwanicki identified this land from ‘Land Trust’²⁰ in Aldinga—which was later developed into the ‘Aldinga Arts Eco Village’ and is to date considered an exemplary development, promoting sustainable development, sustainable lifestyles and community living. This project lends Aldinga another layer of ‘sense of belonging’, which attracts more ‘greenies’ with ideologies of alternative lifestyles.

As shown later in this chapter, especially with regard to the Latitude multi-storey building public notifications, the process of notifying the public is currently problematic, with many instances where the community claims that there is not enough being done to engage with the community over proposed development projects and the community learns of the development proposals through other people, usually with insufficient time to comprehend the project details and inadequate understanding of the long-term impacts to respond carefully and gracefully. This was echoed by most of the interview respondents, where they expressed their dissatisfaction around the practice of public notification. Some of the comments heard were ‘if you don’t keep your eyes and ears open things can sneak through’ (RC14) or ‘Grape Growers Association maintain sort of a media watch, looking for articles on McLaren Vale, that is how it comes to our notice’ (RC10) or ‘ever since I have been a member of that (community) group, I read all the DAs carefully’ (RC19). Some of them expressed that the lack of information being shared also contributes to mistrust of the

²⁰ In 1973 the South Australian Land Commission was empowered to acquire land for urban expansion and provide infrastructure for future suburbs. Later in 1981, this was replaced by the South Australian Urban Lands Trust, a body that held ‘land banks’ for an equitable and sustainable urban development, instead of operating like a land developer riddled with criticism.

authorities, such as ‘I went to as many public meetings and it was still difficult to understand what was being proposed’ (RC19) and ‘Why don’t they explain in simple terms what is happening’ (RC23). However overall, most respondents agreed that the local councillors thus far had been quite communicative and helpful by alerting the community of the development proposals, and the community (Friends of Willunga Basin in particular) also works at having a good relationship at the admin level of the council so that the community is seen as ‘reasonable people rather than extremists who will go around yelling and screaming and writing angry letters to the paper’ (RC21) and ‘[they] try to present reasonable arguments rather than passionate outbursts’ (RC20). However, they did comment that the community used to be able to make more of a difference earlier than they do now.

One of the respondents stated that ‘our council prides itself on the consultation process, and that it was particularly well managed in the case of the Character Preservation District Act at the local community level, local government level and state government level’ (RC21). On observing the efforts made by the government to engage with the community on important Acts and policies, it can be concluded that the authorities do reach out to the public with good intentions. However, some of the commentary observed during the multi-storey development proposal, and as seen in the case of Aldi or OTR, the community voices tend to be ignored until harsher activist methods are adopted by the community, such as reaching out to the media or going to the ERD Court. As seen in the case of Sunday Estate, extreme methods were also used by the community to attract the attention of the authorities and developers to go back to the drawing board for better plans and designs that respond appropriately to local desired character and sustainable practices of development.

7.3 Mapping Community Voices

As described in Chapter 6, community voices around urbanisation of the Willunga Basin have been gathered through various methods— minutes of planning meetings, submissions for development proposals during public consultation periods, social media posts, newspaper articles and semi-structured interviews. This section discusses what was discovered in the semi-structured interviews over the following five main themes: Significant Development Projects, Democratic Process, Built Environment, Community Impact and Ecology. Where applicable, pie charts have been prepared to summarise the findings of the research based on the analytical framework explained in Chapter 6.5

7.3.1 Significant Development Projects

Interview respondents were asked to think about the area that they identify with as part of their bioregion and think back to a development that was significant in their perception. Some of the case studies, such as Willunga High Street upgrade, Sunday Estate, Willunga Garden Village, Aldi and OTR, came up as significant development projects among the interview respondents, which reassured the researcher regarding the selection of case study projects. Other projects, such as Aldinga Eco Village, the cube, suburban divisions, the expansion of the southern expressway, Willunga Recreation Park, the wind farm proposal, and the marina proposal, were also mentioned when asked ‘in your experience, what are the significant developments in the region?’ Respondents also spoke about policies such as the *Character Preservation Act*, rezoning of residential land and the strategic plan for the Willunga Basin.

For the question ‘*Why do you perceive these to be significant developments?*’, their associations with the projects were those of concern and negative feelings. Some of the responses were ‘changed the character of the region’ (RC11), ‘changed the town enormously’ (RC09), ‘change from agriculture area to suburbia’ (RC21), ‘watching it evolve from farmland to residential area’ (RC19), ‘became more peri-urban than rural’ (RC01), ‘proximity to my house’ (RC19), ‘fought long and hard’ (RC14) ‘sad that nobody is protecting the connection between basin and the sea’ (RC13), ‘new people moving don’t understand the region’ (RC22) and ‘could negatively impact the adjoining native scrubland and other valuable assets in the area’ (RC02). This shows not only resistance to change but also genuine concern for ecological impacts and sustainable development, and their perception of the project as significant related to negative emotions about the project due to either the painful grassroots community engagement process or the sense of loss of the aesthetic value of their surroundings.

However, the respondents also spoke about other projects such as the Steiner School, Willunga Garden Village and Aldinga Eco Village with fondness, with statements such as ‘appeals to the local people’ (RC11), ‘surprised that such projects are not replicated elsewhere’ (RC13) and ‘there are some real benefits’ (RC02). One of the respondents also mentioned Willunga Farmers Market, although not an urban development project, as a significant ongoing event that changed ‘things’ for Willunga, bringing in a lot of visitors

from around the region, creating a strong sense of community (RC21). This demonstrates their pride in the place and a sense of place identity even though it is not explicitly expressed.

7.3.2 Democratic Process

The semi-structured interview questions in the second part were framed to obtain a good understanding of the community engagement processes related to urban development projects in the basin. The questions were framed to investigate their level of awareness and experience with the projects.

Responses for the first question, *'How did you get to know about the projects?'*, included statements like 'through social media' (RC02), 'through newspaper' (RC11), 'sometimes there is stuff in the mailbox' (RC16), 'one of the members of our group is alert and constantly checks the council and DPTI website' (RC10), 'our community group maintains a sort of media watch' (RC14) and 'it came through our association newsletter' (RC12)—showing that sending notifications in just the mail only, is not efficient and information is more reliant on a few alert people who then share the information through their community groups and social media.

For the next question, *'What was your level of participation during (and after) the public consultation period?'*, the responses were more complex. The respondents talked about not only their level of engagement but also the general sentiments that they noticed in the public meetings, media reports, social media and group discussions.

Most of the comments were associated with uncertainty or negative connotations, as per their memory, such as 'I was not sure if I supported the development or not, so I went to as many meetings as I could' (RC20), 'I went to different public meetings about the proposal. People were pretty angry and worked up and concerned' (RC03), 'it was very difficult to find facts' (RC19) 'I wrote a letter originally but did not follow up' (RC20), 'I don't think the media is accurately representing the community's views on what was being proposed' (RC06), 'people don't generally tend to speak out about things that they support. people are more inclined to physically put themselves out there when it is something that they don't like' (RC02), 'they are not really interested in what we have to say' (RC06), 'they have their own agenda and just want to tick the boxes' (RC17) and 'most of the frustration comes from a lot of the community being locked out of the design process, nonetheless I think the council could have done a much better job' (RC09).

However, to elaborate further on a respondent’s positive feedback about the engagement process: ‘Our council prides itself on consultation process. Where I have been involved was in the character preservation district—there was really good consultation, state government level, local government and local communities’ (RC21).

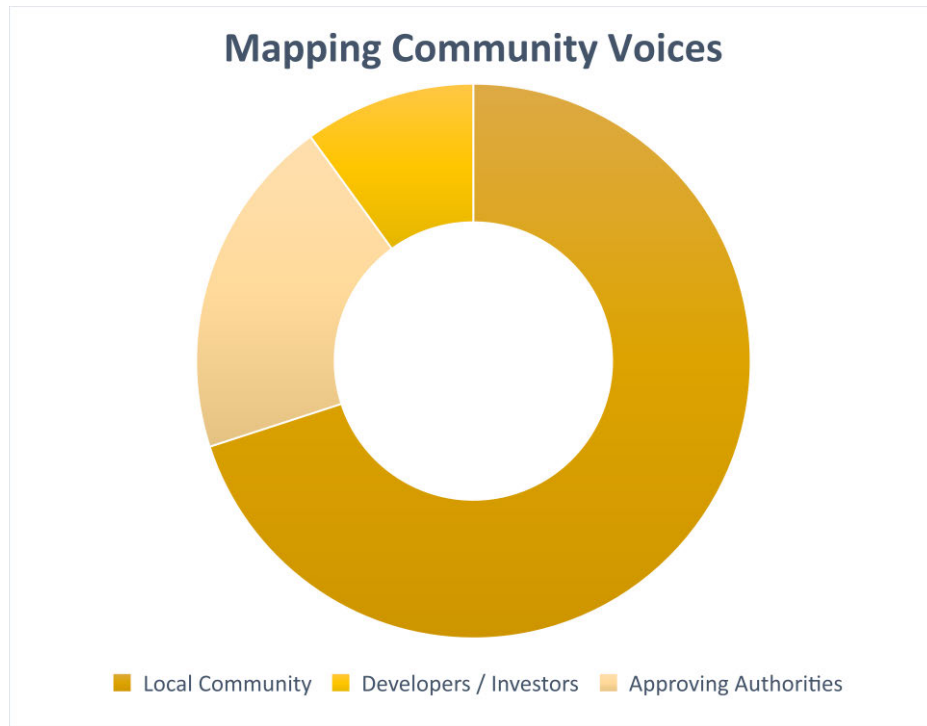


Figure 7.4: Chart depicting the level of engagement of stakeholders as perceived by the interview respondents

In summary, based on the views expressed by the respondents, assigning values to level of engagement of the three main stakeholder groups in the overall development of the region can be depicted as per the chart (Figure 7.4) above. The chart shows that local community members are more conscious and engaged in the urban development projects that impact the Basin.

7.3.3 Built Environment

The third part of the interview enquired about the respondents’ understanding of local character and their aspirations for the future of the bioregion. For the first question, ‘*What elements define local character for you, in terms of architecture and built forms?*’, the respondents described landscape elements, planning and zoning components, heritage values, materials, and streetscapes, with statements such as, ‘large blocks, stone walls, high pitched roofs, lack of signage. Back streets with no formal guttering and curbing,

meandering between houses’ (RC21), ‘main street is mix of cream brick alongside stone cottage’ (RC06) and ‘we talk about the context and texture and the scale and the massing’ (RC01).

Heritage and historic buildings formed a significant part of place identity and local character. Responses included ‘Willunga is a mix of housing now, the historic component is very much an organic version of the landscape—slate from the prehistoric slate quarries, stone from the quarries, mostly single storeyed, very few two storeyed buildings’ (RC01), ‘There are some local heritage places in McLaren Vale. It is very important to try and protect them from automatic demolition interspersed among some pretty ordinary development—there are some beautiful cottages in places’ (RC16), ‘Township of Willunga has maintained a fairly decent quality of the heritage of the region. Apart from beautiful old stone buildings and beautiful old fences that people have put up, restoration of heritage sites that has happened’, ‘It is just the older character that I like’ (RC02), ‘So much history in those settlements, beautiful old buildings’ (RC13), ‘Best example of local identity is Willunga—has maintained its streetscape, some lovely examples of 19th century architecture that is still standing and still being used’ (RC14) and ‘I like the old buildings which have been retained in the main street—they may not all be as functional as the new buildings, but they certainly give a sense of place and a feeling about the place’ (RC20).

Respondents also associated houses on large land parcels (low-density) with local character, and identified an authentic local character in Willunga, but expressed concern for the region lying in the urban growth boundary: ‘Along the coast, Port Willunga and Aldinga, sadly the minister has taken the matter out of council at times and approved developments that really do undermine the sense of place, particularly for Aldinga—Aldinga is really no more than a crossroad, with some lovely buildings around it’ (RC19).

Critique for new development expressed concern for lack of character and included statements such as ‘About the new recreation centre in Aldinga Beach—look at that building (points to the recreation centre) it is a box—looks like bunkers, no windows. I thought it was a freaking storage facility’ (RC02).

The community’s affection for the bioregion’s natural landscape elements is particularly strong: ‘I like the rural landscape, it has that unique formation of being a basin in terms of coast and ranges and the flat’ (RC13), ‘There is a reasonably defined edge of the town, you’ll

know when you are in Willunga and when you are outside Willunga. We are fortunate that we are surrounded by vineyards and hills’ (RC02) and ‘Willunga escarpment, Mount Lofty Ranges that surrounds the entire Aldinga region—that provides a very unique quality especially to Aldinga Beach and it delivers the very essence of what makes Aldinga Beach that semi-rural type community. Those views of the vistas and escarpment, the value of that is enormous’ (RC19).

People expressed visual connections to the landscape elements, particularly Willunga escarpment, from the main roads as an important aspect of their local character, commending the final outcome of one of the recent housing development with ‘very wide entrances are developed in a manner that as you drive down Aldinga Beach you can retain those views and vistas of Willunga escarpment, and there are little pockets and little setbacks little laneway that goes along Aldinga Beach Road, they are there so that the properties are set back further from the road with only one storeyed development, setback and limited height so you get snippets of Willunga escarpment’ (RC19); in addition, ‘the major change is the farming going from almond to vineyard mainly McLaren Vale. I think it has been a good thing for the region. You’ll see the wineries dotted right here up to Willunga. It has brought in lot of people’ (RC11).

There were some comments on the streetscape: ‘The streetscape going down the main road of Aldinga—what they have done and what they are doing is ok, it is very functional’ and ‘The township (Willunga) has a beautiful main street’ (RC02).

The social aspect of the nostalgic rural lifestyles, with small communities where people tend to know each other, was another element that the respondents identified as part of the bioregion’s character: ‘The ability for your children to be free and be able to walk to school, to meet up with their mates after school and walk around the township—primary school aged children’ (RC02), ‘I like the vibrancy of the Willunga main street, particularly on the weekends during the markets and visitors coming in’ (RC22) and ‘Growing up here everyone was connected to agriculture, I didn’t know anybody who was connected to the city. It was like a village. All my extended family lived in all the towns around me. My world was very much those three towns and the boundary of the basin’ (RC13).

For the question ‘*What type of development would you like to see in this region?*’, many concerns were expressed on the type of development in recent times, along with their desire

to make things right going forward: ‘We didn’t have our own language, we are still developing a built environment language—so it sort of happened in the mid-20th century. We are living in the aftermath of that. There are so many things that were built without sensitivity, that don’t contribute positively’ (RC13), ‘It would be a massive asset if all the new things built—not that reproduction, that would be worse—was sympathetic in terms of materials and scale, honouring (RC14), ‘Things looked as though they were imposed, there was not a good existing structure to put that together (RC20), ‘Unfortunately, there was never really any logic in how places were built on McLaren Vale’s main street, so we have these lovely old villa styles with verandahs that come out to the street alongside fairly ugly 1950 and 1960s red brick building which are ugly, The vale has fallen into that trap (RC14), ‘Around here (Aldinga) it is the housing estates that are tiny blocks, the eaves almost touching each other, they say you can hear the neighbours change their mind (RC06), ‘We have always lived in decent sized properties, so I look at those and go God I could never live there (RC13), ‘[Six-storey development] ball has been dropped and it is going to have implications and alter the entire characteristic of the entire town’(SM01), ‘Six-storey development taking out those views is just all sorts of not right. To read in the DA where the applicant says this will provide a sense of identity and sense of place to Aldinga, I find that really really offensive (SM07), ‘Even if we have the infill development in the open paddocks that’s OK, but views of Willunga escarpment in the background delivers balance and helps to retain those particular characteristic of what is Aldinga Beach (RC19), ‘I am OK with development, as long as the size and scale and height of that development is complementary to retaining the views of those vistas, because in essence that’s what helps us be unique and without it we lose that identity’ (SM01) and ‘If you don’t have your eyes and ears open, things can sneak through (RC14).

However, there was also some appreciation of open spaces being incorporated in the development plans: ‘At least now the developers have got their head around leaving open space, planting lots of street trees, so they eventually soften the otherwise fairly ugly profile of places and will actually look quite pretty in a few years (RC14).

From the above comments, it is evident that local character is associated not only with architectural typologies that complement the historic nature of the region, but also planning elements such as land size, larger setbacks and lower building heights. Further, most importantly, retaining visual connection to Willunga escarpment contributes to the community’s sense of place and local character.

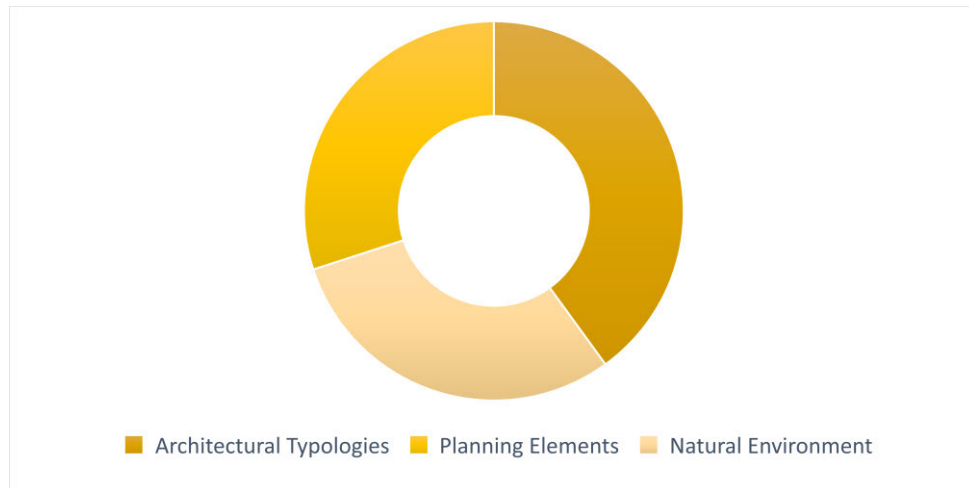


Figure 7.5: Chart depicting respondents association of local character

In summary, it is evident that the respondents identified three main elements (Figure 7.5) to express their understanding of local character – architectural typologies, planning elements and natural environment. By assigning values to the sentiments expressed and plotting them on the pie chart, it is clear that all three elements are equally important to the community.

7.3.4 Community Impact

This part of the interview asked questions related to community spirit and how urban development of the region has affected people and their lifestyles.

For the questions ‘*What does community mean to you?*’ and ‘*What brings the community together?*’, most of the responses were about the social aspect of being part of a small community: ‘Where everyone knows each other. People who live streets always from you, look out for you, my children walk to school, they will always see people they know (RC13), ‘Night markets in old Aldinga is all about community coming together with similar values (RC20), ‘I feel like I am a member of a village; Willunga has its own community. I also feel like part of a community with those other townships in the basin (RC12), ‘Some streets are better than others. I have heard people say, I live on this street kids play on the road together (RC02), ‘In my street, I know most of my neighbours, I have chickens and I grow vegetables and flowers, and I share that with them; that’s how I know my neighbours, it is from sharing all that stuff (RC19), ‘It still has a feel of a country town, there is a strong sense of community, people will help out their neighbours, they will support things that are happening in the town (RC11), ‘If one of those people gets sick—someone holds a fund raising event for just that one person, like to pay bills, the community support for stuff like

that is amazing (RC02), ‘If you are lonely at home, then you just go for a walk and chances are you will meet someone and have a chat, it’s really nice to have that, I don’t know if traditional neighbourhoods take that into consideration, they don’t really have as much opportunity for that kind of cross over (RC22) and ‘Events like farmers markets, bicycle tour, tourism events etcetera makes the place lively (RC21).

While it would be easy to attribute a sense of a strong community to the low population density and rural environment, the next part of the interview explores the role of the built natural environment in encouraging sense of belonging and asks the questions ‘*What makes this community strong and friendly?*’ and ‘*What aspects of the bioregion contributes to the sense of community?*’. Responses included the following: ‘People with common goals live here, hence there is strong bonding (RC12), ‘People come together to protect, preserve and enhance the local historic and rural character of the area. People value what is at the heart of it and don’t want development—standardization, pavement, lighting, etcetera to take over and making this into suburbia (RC09), ‘It is about creating spaces for people to connect—public parks for mums and kids, community centres to do sports—all of that enhances your feeling of community (RC13), ‘There is a woman who lives here who is from Spain, who worked in the winery there, and said what we have here is very unique—the wineries are not competitive, will help each other, sharing tools, knowledge sharing—really big on knowledge sharing, that is quite unique to this region (RC02) and ‘As McLaren Vale continues to grow it maintains that strong sense of community, that feel of country town rather than a suburb, it is officially a suburb, but we don’t want to think of it as one (RC14).

Respondents also expressed concern that this sense of community might soon change with urbanisation: ‘When a 1000 new people move in right there, I don’t know how it’s going to affect the general feel. I have always felt like you can’t prevent progress, you can’t prevent change, sometimes the change might be negative (RC16), ‘Between the townships of Willunga and McLaren Vale, there is an unhealthy thing evolving (I don’t know what to call it), there is something that is creeping in there, part of it is a result of council amalgamations, creating distinctive identities for different townships, people are protective of retaining their own identity. It is no longer identified as an entire area, it is kind of becoming bit more micro, in just looking after my little patch, rather than protecting all of this as one. Now we are in these little singular townships and people are really just focused on their little patch. That is problematic. We need to support each other (RC19), ‘There is lack of sensitivity to what makes a place special, beautiful and meaningful (on the topic of trees on main streets

being cut down) (RC13), ‘New demographics coming in is a problem, mainly young people who can’t afford housing closer to city, so might not be concerned with issues of character of food production. New people coming in here don’t understand the community sense, since they look for cheap land, cheap goods, access to jobs and demand better infrastructure (RC09) and ‘Often communities which have very basic living are much more connected to with each other and seem to be happier than our society, which relies more on material things as a sign of success (what type of car you drive) (RC01).

The responses quoted above show that while there is a strong sense of belonging and community that comes together for common goals, the respondents are concerned about losing their sense of community with the new development. This not only changes the look and feel of their local character, but the increase in population and the type of people coming in to live in the region will contribute to the bioregion losing its uniqueness.

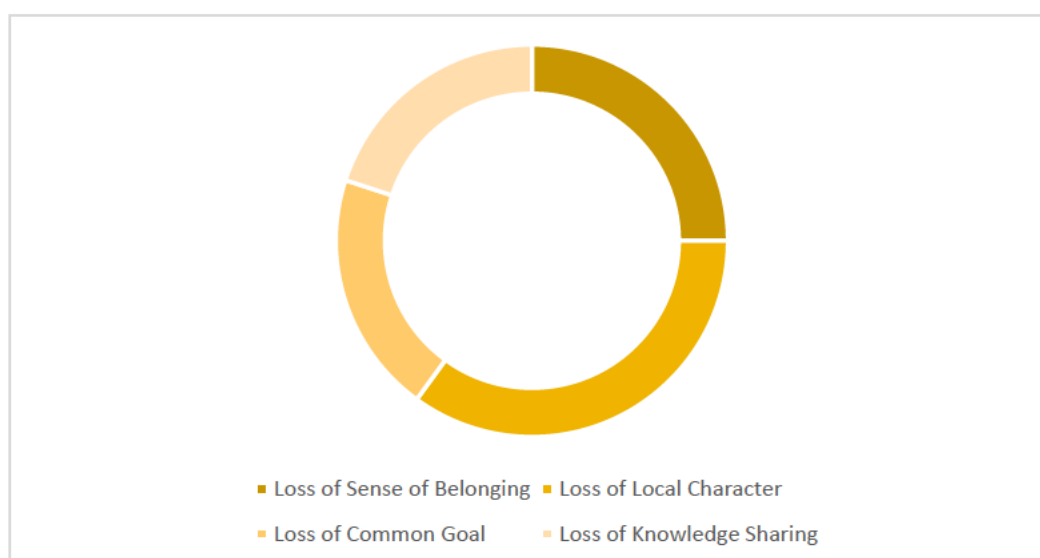


Figure 7.6: Chart depicting impact of urbanisation on local community

In summary, it is evident that the respondents associated with four main elements (as shown in figure 7.6) to express the impact of urbanisation on the Willunga Basin – loss of sense of belonging, loss of local character, loss of common goal and loss of opportunities for knowledge sharing. As per the bioregional principles, sense of belonging and common goal are critical to the success of achieving sustainable development goals and in turn are critical to bioregional consciousness.

7.3.5 Ecology

This part of the interview intended to capture the understanding of the respondents about the ecology of the region, with the following statement: ‘Explain the characteristics of the local ecology and what changes you have observed during your time’.

Responses to ‘explain the characteristics of the local ecology’, ranged from simple phrases to replies that show deep understanding of the bioregional natural environment. Responses included the following: ‘It is a beautiful area (RC01), ‘Corellas have moved in here. They were a problem in new townships near old Noarlunga about 15 years ago, then they moved on to Aldinga (RC03), ‘Not my strength, but there are people who are highly protective of natural systems—water systems, washpool, original scrubland, and all of the coast, cliffs are heritage listed (RC09), ‘There is a sense of fragility of the whole ecosystem (RC01), ‘One thing we grape growers in McLaren Vale are very proud of is our geology, it’s a very unique geology (RC14), ‘This has quite a diverse ecology (RC02) and ‘Washpool collects all of the water that comes off the catchment of the hills and washes it down. Amazing piece of natural—don’t know what to call it, the pebble banks, pebble rocks on the beach, the connectivity between the two, how the rocks come out and stops the water coming out from the washpool and then the rocks drop off from the ocean and lower it down for it to flush through. It’s just amazing how nature does that. People have worked with that natural system, closed off roads that relate to it to make that area bigger, there are groups that are working to protect even further through legislation and have it connected to Aldinga scrub (RC19).

As for the ‘changes observed in the ecosystems in your time here’, the responses ranged from nostalgia of a rural landscape to strong understanding of ecological elements, including the following: ‘We had paddocks behind us and forests across us, we were the last house in the town. Open space all around you, birds everywhere, massive almond trees, lot of native vegetation, scrub, kangaroos. We did bush walks, roads were dirt. Everything was very wild and untamed and natural (RC13), ‘I have seen a lot of changes. What came straight to my head is pelicans—we have a lot of migratory birds that come into Aldinga and breed in the washpool and the conservation park and other surrounding areas, from China etcetera. When the man-made wetlands were made, connecting the stormwater that came out of Sunday Estate created these wetlands—we had all these pelicans that came into town (RC19), ‘Ecology of the Willunga Basin is much changed; the hope of retaining some of the native

species tends to rely on the water ways; the difficulty of managing that is water ways are also very good transporters of obnoxious weeds and pests as well (RC09) and ‘The Aldinga scrub is the largest remnant of the coastal native vegetation in the metropolitan area and is incredibly important. Ironically most people who live in the area—Silver Sands—really support the bush but they shouldn’t be living there because that is the strip between the sea and this pocket of native scrub. The washpool also is the result of drainage that were put in the early days—it was a very important place for the community in the early days—possum skin tanning and dreaming place—and it floods occasionally and the water laps at the doorsteps of houses in Silver Sands (RC01).

Some of the respondents expressed both hope and despair for the future of the ecology of the bioregion: ‘I just hope that with every bit of progress, there’s a little bit of environmental action going with it whether it is with planting more trees in the green spaces or putting more effort into cleaning up the green spaces that are there, or enhancing the green spaces through either play structures or more planting etcetera. Just maintaining the integrity of what is actually there and what they know is going to be kept (RC02).

7.4 Case Studies

This section explains and evaluates the process of development applications, public consultation, community activism and the end result (DNFs) of sometimes violent negotiations among the community, council and developer. For the sake of this research a few varied projects have been studied in detail: two housing developments of diverse nature, two retail/commercial projects, one urban realm project and one proposed multi-storey building. As mentioned in Chapter 6, these six projects were chosen for representation of various types of development and across a timeline to capture the change (if any) in the process of community engagement, as well as to note the sentiments and expectations of the local community over a period of time and across different types of development. Figure 7.7 shows the location of all these projects marked up on a google earth image.

Typically, a developer or landowner comes forward with the intention to develop the land for various reasons—to set up an intentional living community²¹, to provide essential services, to meet housing demands, to address cultural desires, to provide infrastructure, or

²¹ Intentional living community is a community of people sharing land and housing, dedicated to living with a purpose and commitment to a mutual concern, social ideal or collective values and interests, usually associated with ecovillages, co-housing communities, and communes.

for commercial gains. A development application is submitted, and designs are negotiated by the planner, whose main aim is to ensure that the development is in accordance with the guidelines as stipulated in the development plan. Depending on the nature of the project, the development application is then publicly notified, giving an opportunity for the stakeholders to engage, comment, object or favour the development. According to the response, the project is then approved, refused or asked for iterations. In an ideal world, this would result in desirable outcomes for the developer, landowner, local council and neighbours, as well as everyone who may be affected by this development. However, many times and for various reasons, the affected neighbours or community members only learn about the project when the signs go up on the site, by which time the opportunity to negotiate desirable outcomes is lost.

A development application is submitted to the concerned authority, usually the local council or the state development authority. For the Willunga Basin, current local council is City of Onkaparinga, and for projects that meet certain criteria, the application is submitted to the Development Assessment Commission (DAC), now called (since 1 August 2017) the State Commission Assessment Panel (SCAP). The planners then assess the application against the guidelines stipulated in the latest development plan for the council and negotiate with the applicant to make changes when needed to ensure that the application meets development criteria and fits within the legislated regulations and rules as stated in the development plan. These development plans mainly address type of use at the particular location, parcel size, and building location and size, along with ‘desired character’—a theme that this research investigates. These rules and regulations have been established through a set of complex statutory procedures and legislative frameworks. These legislative frameworks are a result of the state government’s broad vision for land use and built development, which in this particular case in South Australia is the vision of sustainable land use and development. This has been outlined in the state’s planning strategy—the 30-Year Plan for Greater Adelaide.

Sections below discuss in detail the case studies that have been chosen for in-depth study, exploring the aspects of the democratic process of applications and approvals, and the process of negotiations among the planners, community members and applicants around design elements of the proposals, focusing mainly on the role of public participation/community engagement in the final outcome of these projects.



Figure 7.7: The Willunga Basin aerial view depicting case studies, natural features and boundary lines (Marked-up screenshot from Google Maps)

7.4.1 Willunga Garden Village—Willunga

Long before low emission and sustainable development came into vogue, one visionary local resident/developer—Ian Collett—decided to develop a housing estate on a 10 acre property on the eastern side of Willunga township (figure 7.8). The subdivisions were going to be smaller than conventional sized blocks, but the uniqueness of this development would be in the central shared patch of 3 acre land owned and managed by the residents. The houses would be energy efficient, made of rammed earth on-site. Most importantly, Collett’s vision was to build and encourage ‘community spirit’, recognising that conventional subdivisions by design led to isolation, fragmentation and lost opportunities for social interaction. At a time when gated communities were becoming popular—projects that were built like fortresses, with no public access, electronically managed gates and inward-looking houses on strata titles—Willunga Garden Village, although an intentional community, was developed to have no boundary walls, with allotments that are Torrens titled, with public roads right along the project site and houses built as per owners’ desires. However, the buildings would have to follow some basic guidelines and fairly loose controls to ensure social ethos and neighbourliness without losing individual property rights and social autonomy (Hopkins 1988).

A development application (DA/5871/1984) was submitted to the District Council of Willunga in 1984 to develop an intentional community on a 10 acre property by Ian Collett and Tina Collett. The plan was to subdivide the property into 20 Torrens titled allotments with encumbrances on the allotments to build in a certain way. Collett admits that it was an enormous and complex amount of legal work (Hopkins 1988) to initiate the project. It was finally approved and ready for sales towards the end of 1988. The development application file itself seems to be lost and was not available for viewing at the City of Onkaparinga office. However, many of the residents responded to the letterbox drop flyers and participated in the semi-structured interviews.

Initially planned to be sold to only those who were interested in and wanted to practise permaculture, it was later opened to all buyers who would abide by the building encumbrances and design guidelines. A shareholder company called Willunga Garden Village Holding Co. Ltd was set up. All owners of the residential allotments in this development became the shareholders of this company. The company set up some design guidelines for the dwellings to be constructed by the allotment owners. The design guidelines

included a design philosophy that the dwelling would be unobtrusive and in harmony with the surrounding environment, built and natural. Apart from clear rules for building siting, height, setback, roof forms, colour schemes and access to views of the bay, the design guideline states that the preferred building material be stabilised rammed earth, clay-brick, timber and stone, with preferred roofing materials to be terracotta tiles, slate, shingles, shakes and V crimp Colorbond. Galvanised iron fences and buildings were not permitted.



Figure 7.8: Willunga Garden Village aerial view (Google Maps)

Ian and Tina Collett went on to set up a few businesses to promote their ideologies and practices. A business called Stabilised Earth Adelaide was set up jointly in 1986 to build monolithic rammed earth walls. They ensured that their working mix was tested and certified by NATA (National Association of Testing Authorities). Tina Collett set up her own design consultancy to prepare house plans and advice on energy efficient designs. They seemed to have worked efficiently and successfully liaised with owner builders, other architects, and designers and trades people, providing all required details to build rammed earth homes (figures 7.9 – 7.12). Although Ian is deceased and Tina has moved on, Stabilised Earth

Adelaide is still in business, offering a whole design and build package. They are part of the support group for rammed earth builders—ASEG (Affiliated Stabilised Earth Group).

The layout of Willunga Garden Village is devised very cleverly so that the houses all front onto public streets, which run along the boundary of the 10 acre property. Thus, although they have neighbours who are part of the Willunga Garden Village community, the allotments are Torrens titled and the local council becomes responsible for maintaining the roads and services. The two streets—Kookaburra Court and Quarry Court—end in small cul-de-sacs, ensuring only local traffic movement. Only three of the allotments are designed as battleaxe sections, set behind another allotment and accessed through a driveway. The common area is in the middle, surrounded by the 20 houses. Aptly called ‘The Common’(figure 7.10), it comprises about 2.5 acres of landscaped land, vegetable gardens, a swimming pool, maintenance workshop/toolshed, watercourse and lawns. Accessible, owned and maintained by all the residents, this common area does require people with time, energy and skills. It is currently being managed by organising working bees, and there is a substantial amount of empathy towards those residents who are unable to participate. A few of the residents admitted the community would benefit if there were more young people residing here and contributing; however, young families would definitely find it difficult to afford this expensive place (RC12, RC20, RC22).



Figure 7.9: The Barn, communal building in WGV- rammed earth structure
(Source: Author)



Figure 7.10: Rammed earth dwellings (above) and The Common in WGV (below) (Source: author)



Figure 7.11: Interiors of one of the house, WGV, rammed earth wall
(Source: realestate.com)



Figure 7.12: Interiors of one of the house, WGV, rammed earth wall, terracotta floor and timber frames
(Source: author)

The development has no doubt been successful, with most of its residents happy with the nature of things. In their words: ‘Willunga Garden Village is a beautiful community and very neighbourly, they looked after me when my spouse died, they involved me with everything (RC12), ‘there is a feeling of attachment amongst the people who live in the village, we have shared meals in the communal building called ‘The Barn’, swimming pool is very well used on hot days, we recognise people as being part of our community, when you meet them elsewhere, we stop and talk about local things like – what happened to the apple tree?’ (RC20), ‘I was one of the first buyers here, but for various reasons I moved to Barossa for a few years and now I am very happy to be back here, luckily, I was able to buy back the same house that I used to live in’ (RC22) .

As a model, Willunga Garden Village has a lot to offer. Encumbrances and design guidelines do not necessarily mean severe control. According to one resident, ‘changes are allowed as long as everybody agrees to it. But mostly, it is a community of people with common goals, so there have been no major issues (RC22). Being a shareholder company, the village holds regular shareholder meetings. Although the structure is very formal, in reality the community is very informal. The community tends to fall back on the formal structure when in need, usually when a change is needed or if there is any conflict.

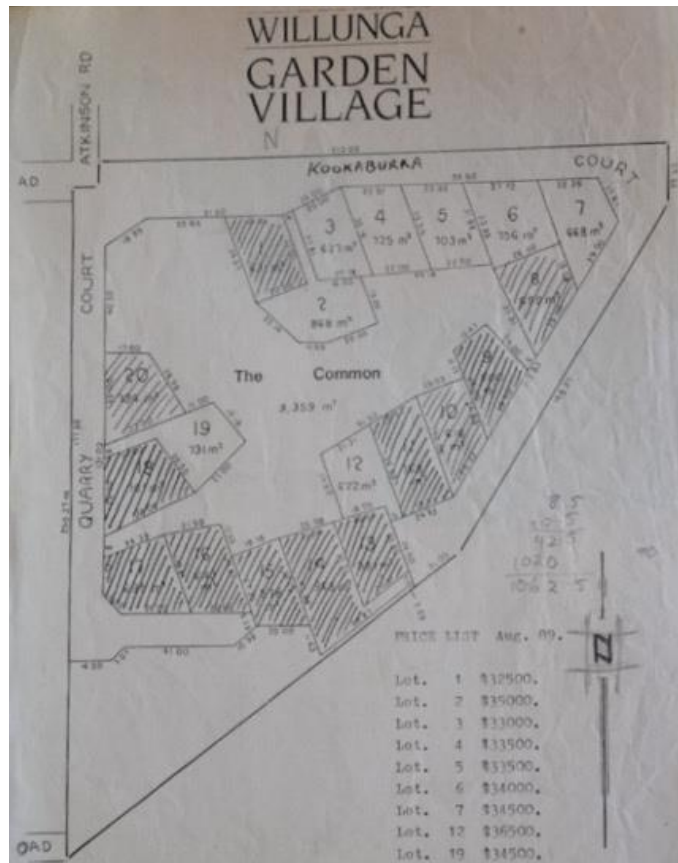


Figure 7.13: Willunga Garden Village plan (Source: WGV Library)



Figure 7.14: Willunga Garden Village landscape plan (Source: WGV Library)



Figure 7.15: Willunga Garden Village aerial photo, 1992 (Source: WGV Library)



Figure 7.16: Willunga Garden Village compared with a gated community (Source: WGV Library)



Figure 7.17: Willunga Garden Village as a case study in the *Design Magazine* (Source: WGV Library)



Figure 7.18: Willunga Garden Village brochure, inside (Source: WGV Library)

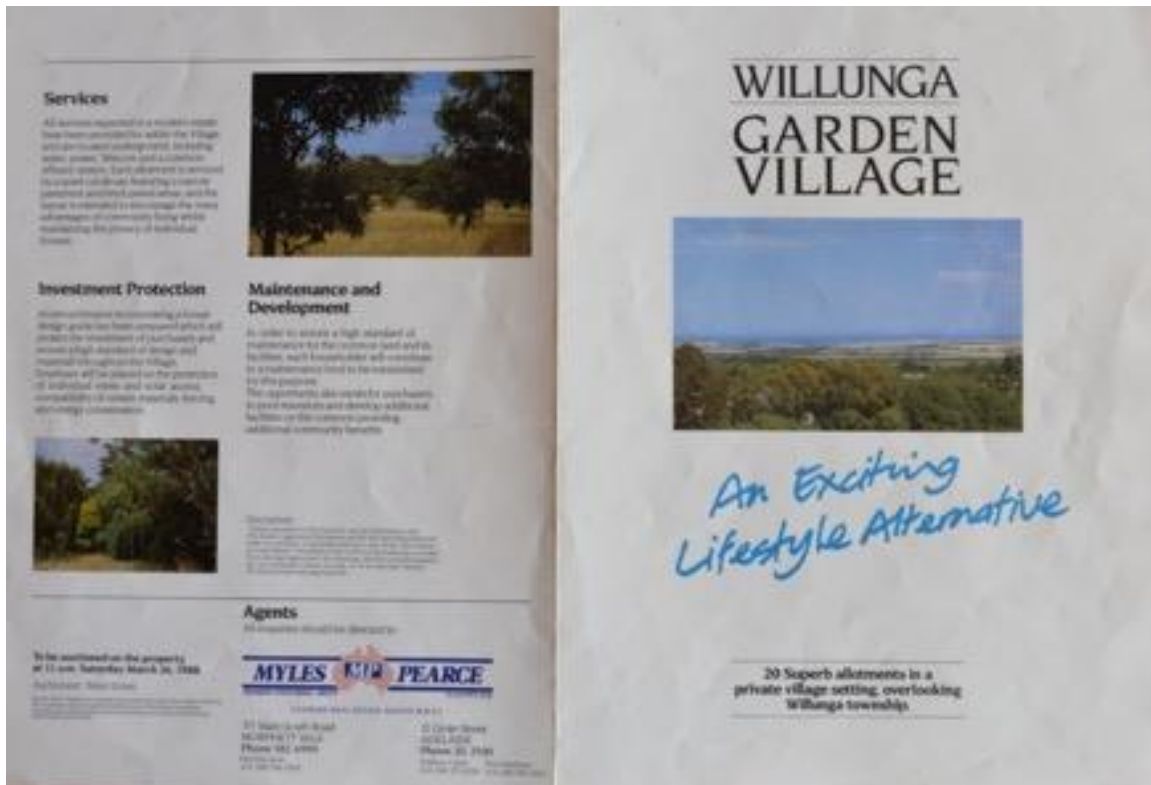


Figure 7.19: Willunga Garden Village brochure, cover
(Source: WGV Library)

The residents admitted that they liked not only the house and the shared open space, but mainly the feeling of instantly being in a community.²² One of the first residents to move in when the development was complete, sold and moved to Barossa Valley for a few years, and then regretted the decision and managed to buy back the house she originally owned.²³ This indicates how strongly knit the community is.

Although the study could not find any official documents related to public notifications and community engagement processes for the development application, this project plays a significant role in understanding the sentiments of the local community towards urbanisation trends of their region. All of the interview respondents, media articles and promotional materials seemed to point out that this project was seen as encouraging development for the region. In fact, one of the interview respondents, who is not a resident of the community, pointed to the houses around the corner of Kookaburra Court and Quarry Court and said, ‘this is where the greenies live’,²⁴ with almost a tone of appreciation and pride.

²² Interview respondent Dr Chris Collin—most recent resident of Willunga Garden Village, living in the house that first belonged to Ian Collett, the architect and developer of Willunga Garden Village.

²³ Interview respondent Wendy Avery—also volunteers at the local organic health food cooperative shop on Willunga High Street, The Singing Cricket Co-op.

²⁴ Sandra Jonker—interview respondent, resident of McLaren Vale Flat.

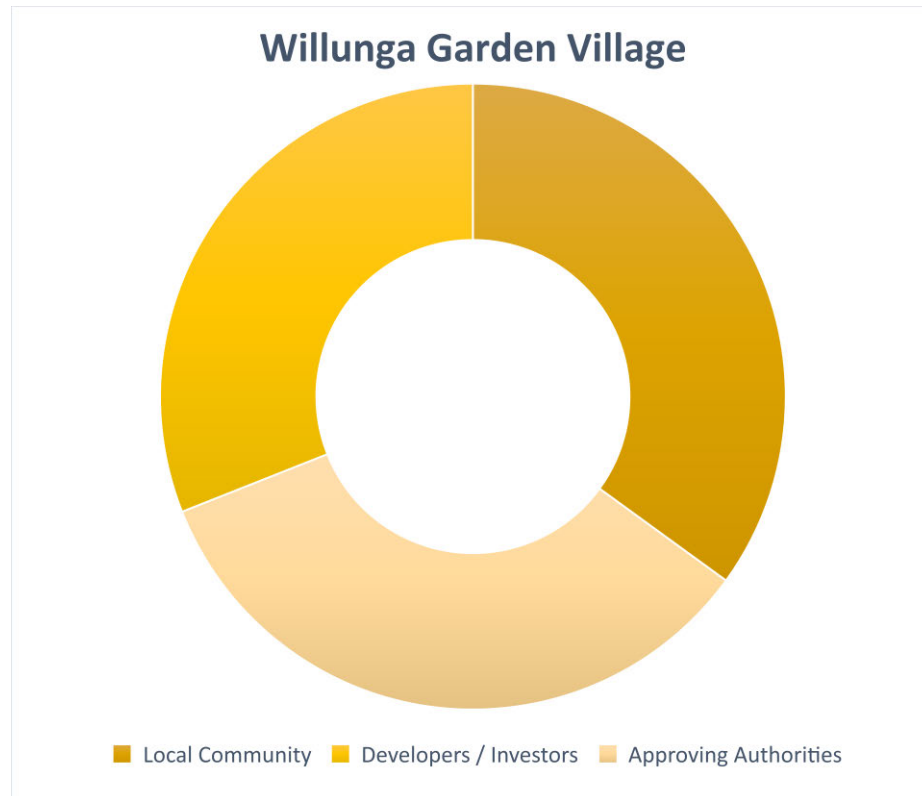


Figure 7.20: Chart depicting level of engagement by stakeholders for WGV

To summarise, it is evident that the development of Willunga Garden Village was fairly encouraging and plotting the observations on to a pie chart (Figure 7.20) shows that all three stakeholder groups are more or less equally engaged making this project closer to the theoretical ideal.

7.4.2 Sunday Estate—Aldinga Beach

Early in 2003, a residential development application (DA/8572/2003) was submitted to the development assessment panel at City of Onkaparinga for broad-hectare land division and development of about 691 housing allotments on 67.7 hectares of land abutting the 300 ha protected Aldinga Scrub Conservation Park (as shown in figures 7.21 to 7.24).

This project named Sunday Estate seems to have been a big challenge for the local council, local community and developer. According to the planner who managed the case, the main issue expressed by the community was the desire to see a landscaped interface/buffer between the housing development and Aldinga Scrub Conservation Park. However, the media reports, ERD Court appeals and interview respondents have a different story to tell.

The land earmarked for residential development lies between Aldinga Beach Road and Aldinga Scrub Conservation Park. Unfortunately, when the land was marked for development in 1969, there was no provision made to provide a buffer between the scrubland and the residential zone. So, it was no surprise that the developer planned to utilise the full extent of the land and create 700 plus allotments. However, the vigilant local community groups objected to the development and put in representations to the council, fearing there was insufficient buffer zone between the proposed development and the protected native scrubland, thus leading to irreparable damage to the biodiversity of the region. They were also concerned that there was not enough infrastructure to support such an influx of new residents. They met to hold their first rally against the proposal on 20 September 2003 at John Nicholl Reserve (*Advertiser* 2003a).



Figure 7.21: Aerial image of Sunday Estate, Aldinga
(Source: Google Maps, marked up)

The development assessment panel took into consideration reports from various government agencies regarding infrastructure, national parks and wildlife, and concluded that the development met and even exceeded the expectations and requirements of the then development plan for the region (*Advertiser* 2003b). Onkaparinga Council's assessment panel approved the housing development to create 691 allotments/houses. Local residents were disappointed with the decision but did not stop their protests.

People came together to form a community group called Southern Eco Alliance and protested in front of the Parliament House, asking for development works to be held off until 'some very important environmental, archaeological and cultural issues had been addressed' (Milbank 2004). They continued to protest for more care to be taken to ensure that the

development did not jeopardise the area’s wildlife, water table and cultural significance for the Kaurna people (Slater 2004a).

The community’s gripe was also that ‘the community just gets told what development is going to happen, rather than being asked for opinions’ (Ms McDuie, as reported in the *Advertiser*, 24 April 2004).

In July 2004, a news reporter recounted the damage the development work was doing to the local flora and fauna and blamed the zoning decisions for not providing enough buffer/boundary from the scrub land to residential zones. The article also reported that local eco-groups had long been lobbying for changing the zoning for this ‘piece of landscape’ and at that point in time were ‘demoralised at the fruitlessness of their educated recommendations and supplications’ (Harris 2004). Echidnas had started moving out and falling victims to cars and dogs.

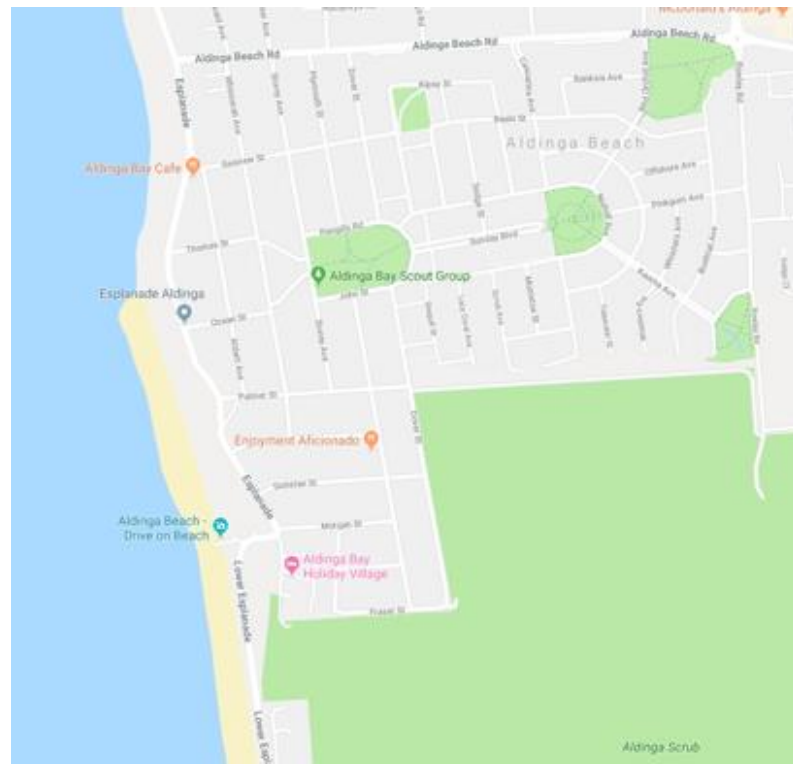


Figure 7.22: Sunday Estate plan, Aldinga Beach



Figure 7.23: Sunday Estate layout, Aldinga Beach, satellite image (Source: MetroMap 2022)



Figure 7.24: Wetlands at the edge of Sunday Estate, buffer between housing and protected scrubland
(Source: marked up MetroMap image)

The protest, however, was not that of peaceful talks and negotiations. The first instance of protests captured by media was in September 2003, where Aldinga residents were reported to be waving placards saying ‘Save our Scrub’. They argued that just a wire fence separating the protected scrub and a 700 allotment housing development was not appropriate (Merola 2003b). The protesters were lobbying Onkaparinga Council to prevent the development approval and were looking at the state government to intervene. They were of the opinion that there was not enough infrastructure to allow for so many new houses to be built. The region lacked schools, doctors, childcare facilities and recreation, as well as modern sewerage systems. More than half of the existing housing stock was reported to be using septic tanks and not connected to a main sewerage system (Slater 2004b; *Advertiser* 2004b).

A few months later, in April 2004, protesters were arrested trying to stop trucks from offloading equipment (Slater 2004b; *Advertiser* 2004b), chaining themselves to compound fences and a grader (Slater 2004a) until the developers had to stop work; machines were removed and the Construction Workers Union representatives had to advise workers to not

enter the site until the development had community support. There was a lot of media publicity, especially in the month of April 2004, and TV news coverage, including complaints from protesters about being misquoted by the media.

Eventually, the state government announced a land swap with the developers and bought the land adjoining the scrubland so that a buffer could be maintained between the scrub and the residential allotments. This was land owned by SA Water and set aside for stormwater. The open space that has been saved is known as Grassy Knoll and is of high cultural significance to the Kaurna Indigenous people of the region (*Advertiser* 2004a).

There were many media reports, some exaggerated, some truly depicting the community's emotions and some false reporting. At one point, the mayor of City of Onkaparinga had to publicly clarify that the residential development was not in the scrubland as was reported but on land that had been farmed for 100 years and had been zoned for residential development more than 30 years ago (*Advertiser* 2005).

The number of allotments were reduced to 600 from 700 plus and wider roads were created. An extra access road was introduced to reduce traffic on Aldinga Beach Road to not only create a safe access to the residents but also maintain the visual connections to Willunga escarpment. The encumbrance on the houses included low building heights, again to ensure that Willunga escarpment would still be visible from most parts of the estate. Five major open spaces/reserves were created within the estate, the biggest one being 1.6 ha and called Sunday Park.

Eventually, by December 2006, the developers completed constructing about 110 houses and were able to start selling the allotments and houses, promoting it as a project that set 'new environmental benchmarks for home and landscape design' along with 'well-designed open spaces and walking trails', apart from being so close to the popular coastline of Aldinga (*Advertiser* 2006).

Sometime in 2008, Grassy Knoll, one of the reserves facing Aldinga Beach Road was transferred to City of Onkaparinga's care and control, who then went beyond the standard naming of reserves procedure and engaged with the local community to assign an appropriate name. Their engagement process included contacting stakeholders and key interest groups about inviting communities to comment on the naming options, placing notices in local newspapers, mailing information and a survey to residents living within 500

metres of the site, and setting up a community open day, providing information and surveys for participants to complete (City of Onkaparinga 2008). Key stakeholders that were recognised were Kurna Heritage Board, Kurna Warra Pintyandi, Canberra Investment Corporation (the developers), Friends of Willunga Basin (local community group) and immediate family of John Lawrie. Feedback received clearly showed that the community valued recognising Kurna cultural heritage, the importance of native vegetation and the use of local indigenous plants; minimal natural impact; uncluttered feel; appreciation of hydrology; stories of the spring, recognising the existence of a number of cultures (indigenous, non-indigenous, new and existing residents); and finally the importance of preserving views from the reserve to the scrub and Willunga hills.

In recognition of the significance of the reserve to both the Kurna people and wider community, the reserve was renamed Mukutilla/John Lawrie Reserve²⁵ in the honour of local community member and urban planner John Lawrie for his contributions in creating this reserve to allow for at least one corridor of vision to the south making visual connections to Willunga escarpment.

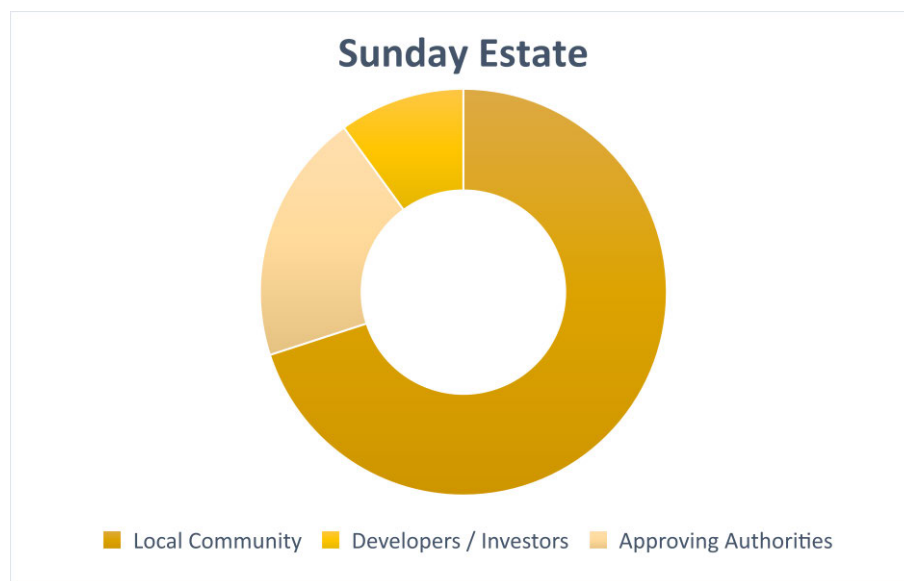


Figure 7.25: Chart depicting level of stakeholder engagement - Sunday Estate

²⁵ Reserve dual named by the City of Onkaparinga in 2008. The reserve honours both John Lawrie (deceased), who was a prominent advocate for open space and views to the ranges, and the traditional landowners, the Kurna people, who have a strong attachment to the area through the Echidna Dreaming in the Aldinga scrub, which is linked to the men’s dreaming site ‘Murrawirrabirka’. ‘Mukutilla’ is a new Kurna word developed to match the local name ‘The Knoll’ and means ‘on the hill’ (*mukut* means ‘hill’, and *illa* means ‘on’) (<https://www.firstnames.ruciac.com/wp-content/plugins/leaflet-maps-marker-pro/leaflet-fullscreen.php?marker=555>).

Overall, it is evident that the development of Sunday Estate triggered a lot of grassroots activism and plotting the observations on to a pie chart (Figure 7.25) shows that local community members were heavily engaged in the process, taking on a large portion of the burden to ensure urban development that not only honoured local character, but also improved local ecology of the adjoining wetlands and forming a good buffer between the urbanised patch of land and the threatened patch of native scrubland.

7.4.3 OTR Fuel Station on Port Road—Aldinga

In 2014, Shahin Properties Pty Ltd submitted development applications for 21 service station outlets across metropolitan Adelaide to the DAC. One of them was on Port Road Aldinga (as shown in figures 7.22 and 7.23). The application for redeveloping an existing service station to four times the size was rejected by the local council (City of Onkaparinga) on the basis that it was in variance on many instances with the council's development plan. The local community had put in 100 submissions, half of which objected to the project in its current form. Their main concern was that the development proposal did not follow 'historic township guidelines' and would ruin the 'semi-rural ambience' and was not in line with the 'historical image' of the region, especially as the site is strategically located at the 'entrance' of Aldinga at the corner of Main South Road and Port Road (figure 7.26, 7.27). The applicants appealed to the ERD Court, and the development details were negotiated over 4 months. Eventually, the matter was passed on to the DAC to be 'case managed' and was approved. The applicants, however, saw this redevelopment to be a 'significant economic stimuli for the region'. Under new laws enforced, projects worth more than \$3 million were referred to the DAC and taken out of local council's authorities to process. Although this particular application was valued initially at \$1.8 million, eventually multiple applications were grouped together to exceed the \$3 million limit, and hence, it was referred to the DAC for approval.

It is important to note that when the application was met with refusals and court petitions, the developer found a loophole in the legislated policies and moved the application from local council to DAC. Although a state spokesperson did say that the applications were considered on the basis of individual merits, local community members stipulate that this made approvals easy for the applicant.

As for the community voices, the people who resisted this development said that they were not against redevelopment, but the design and plan of the proposal was not in line with the ‘desired character’ of the region’s development plan, while the people who supported the redevelopment application merely said they welcomed the economic benefits and did not comment much on the design or suitability of the application in terms of architectural character or aesthetics.

However, there was a significant change in design from the initial application to the final outcome, with reduced heights of the signage, lower roof heights, subtle colours and larger setback from the road (figures 7.28, 7.29). This change was primarily triggered by community opposing the approvals and demanding a better design.



Figure 7.26: Aldi and OTR fuel station on Port Road, Aldinga
(Source: Google Maps, marked up)



Figure 7.27: OTR fuel station (Source: Google Maps)



Figure 7.28: OTR fuel station view from South road
(Source: author)



Figure 7.29: OTR fuel station view from Port road (Source: author)

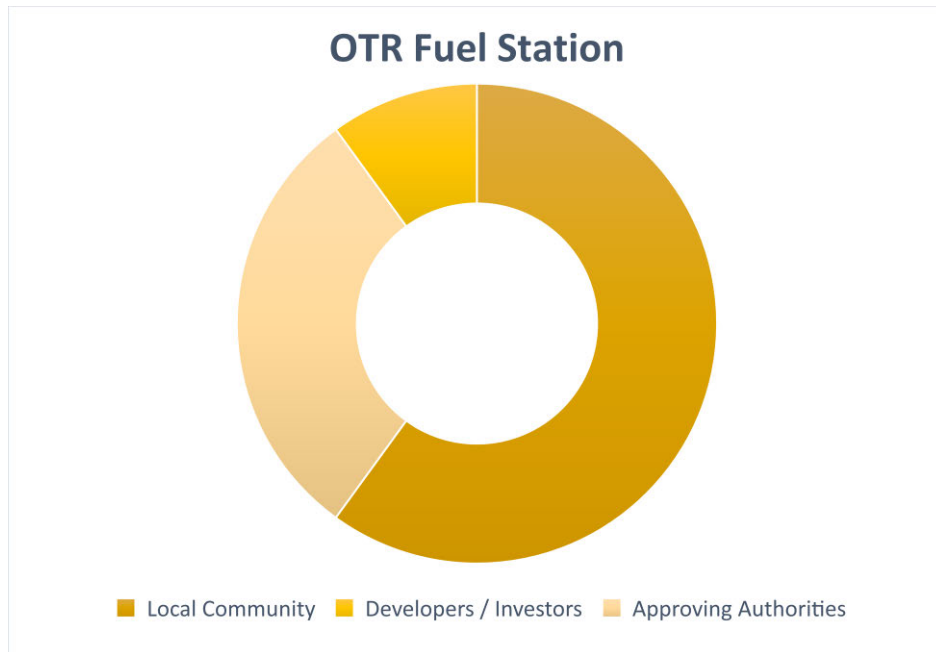


Figure 7.30: Chart depicting level of stakeholder engagement for OTR

In summary, it is evident that the development of OTR triggered some grassroots activism and plotting the observations on to a pie chart (Figure 7.30) shows that local community were heavily engaged in ensuring a built form that complied with local character, by reducing built heights and using colours that align with local semi rural character.

7.4.4 Aldi on Port Road—Aldinga

In November 2014, a development application (DA/145/2758/2014) was submitted by Aldi Australia to Onkaparinga Council (now called City of Onkaparinga) proposing a non-complying supermarket with a gross floor area of 1566 square metres (figure 7.32) at the corner of Port Road and Main South Road (figure 7.31). An approval for the application was granted, with reserved matters related to stormwater and landscaping and 29 other planning conditions. Following that, two local community groups—Friends of Willunga Basin and Friends of Port Willunga—submitted an appeal with the ERD Court against the council’s decision. However, within a month, the minister for planning approved an ‘Existing Activity Centres Policy Review DPA’ by placing a notice in the *South Australian Government Gazette*. This review made procedural changes to proposed development in Policy Area 62, making exceptions for retail establishment to be exempted from being a non-complying development. This prompted Aldi and the community groups to adjourn the appeal to later

in August 2016. Meanwhile, Aldi decided to go back to the drawing board and lodged a revised plan to the DAC in June 2016 to be assessed by merits.

Earlier in 2009, a planning consent had already been granted to build a supermarket on the same land by the ERD Court. However, the developers did not proceed with the development, and subsequently, changes to Onkaparinga Council's Development Plan were introduced to restrict the size of retail development.

The development application was referred to the Commissioner of Highways to ensure appropriate infrastructure was developed/maintained and to the State Heritage Unit because of the proximity of the proposed development to a state heritage listed building. The Commissioner of Highways had supported the initial application (DA/145/2578/2014), with the DPTI facilitating the construction of a roundabout at the junction of Main South Road and Port Road. Main South Road is under the care of the DPTI, while Port Road is under the care of Onkaparinga Council.

According to interview respondents, media articles and social media posts, the community did not really object to a supermarket being built at that location, but they questioned and objected to the design of the building. Although the site is not within any historic core and hence not subject to any heritage and character considerations, the community demanded that the proposal be in line with local township character and appropriate to their cultural landscape.



Figure 7.31: Aerial image of Aldi, Aldinga
(Source: Google Maps)

The design was justified in the initial application with claims that the visual barrier by trees made it unnecessary for the design to be cohesive with the local character of the town/streetscape. However, in order to address community concerns, Aldi took the advice of heritage architects and revised their proposal to suit the local character. They made the decision to depart from their generic Aldi corporate form of building and design something more appropriate for the region. Typical Aldi stores are flat-roofed box buildings built of concrete precast panels (as shown in figure 7.32). Following media publicity (figure 7.33), community agitations and finally the appeal to the court, Aldi undertook to ‘respect’²⁶ the unique character of this location and design a building that would recognise the unique township character, adjoining heritage listed properties and the heritage conservation area status. The revised design is a building with hipped gables to minimise the massing of the building, a verandah entrance, sandstone-coloured precast concrete panels, wallaby-coloured roof sheeting and a reduced height of 7.95 metres (as shown in figures 7.34). Although this may seem like a token gesture to expert architectural eyes, this new proposal seems to have been met with more enthusiasm by the local communities.



Figure 7.32: Typical design of Aldi stores (Source: Development Application 145/E016/16)

²⁶ As quoted in the revised development application 145/E016/16 by representatives of the applicant.



1

Friends of Willunga Basin chairman Geoff Hayter holds a helium balloon to show how tall the proposed Aldi store would be.

Figure 7.33: Media image protesting height of proposed Aldi building (Source: <https://www.adelaidenow.com.au/messenger/south/aldis-aldinga-store-step-closer-despite-residents-opposition/news-story/6d8464b516faf89030f4037b06a1d8ab>)



Figure 7.34: Final outcome of Aldi store at Aldinga along South Road
(Source: author)

It is surprising that despite the site being located in Historic Conservation Area 5 Port Willunga/Aldinga and many design guidelines, the initial proposal had not given it due consideration nor designed the store to suit the location. However, it must be noted that the desired character notes in the development plan consolidated on 19 September 2013 provide very limited instructions. It seems to be aimed more at conserving existing heritage buildings and not so much as guiding further development. On page 50 under the Historic

Conservation Area Desired Character Notes for Port Willunga/Aldinga Area 5, it is stated that ‘it is intended that there be retention of the historic village character of Aldinga and Port Willunga as early settlements with a unique thematic combination of farming, shipping, port, fishing and holidaying. Existing rubble walling, and buildings erected predominantly between 1836 and 1919 will be conserved and retained in any development to preserve historic character’.

As can be seen from the above statements, there is not much instruction on what is expected from the new developments, particularly for something like a supermarket. In addition, further down from pages 454 to 463 in the development plan, there is a table that describes in detail the type of designs that could be applicable to the historic conservation area. The table provides detailed guidelines in words on general design approach, scale and proportion, form, materials and finish, and visual impact, as well as specific guidelines with sample diagrams on built form, roof form and pitch, windows, and doors—which do not appear to have been referred to in the initial application for the store design. However, the samples do seem to be meant more for development that could occur right next to a heritage building and should strive to complement the building rather than mimic or overpower it.

The heritage assessment report submitted in 2014 with the development application explains why the current historic conservation area policies would not influence the design of the supermarket. The report provides detail about how the location of the site is quite disconnected from the main Aldinga Village. Although the site is in close proximity to many local heritage places and also a state heritage place, the existence of mature tree planting creates a visual separation between the supermarket and Aldinga Village. It is claimed that these trees form a landscaped buffer between the historic built form of Aldinga Village and the subject site. The report highlights this element in great detail and photographs. One of the local activists²⁷ who argued against the project design stated that while it may be true that the village and the streetscape of the surroundings would not be directly visible from the supermarket, it was no reason for the building to disregard the local character and no reason for the supermarket not to be designed in line with local desired architectural character.

²⁷ Stephanie Johnston— independent planning consultant, one of the respondents in the semi-structured interviews recognises the activist nature of engagement.

While the heritage assessment report refers to various principles of development control (PDCs) from City of Onkaparinga’s Development Plan, it argues that ‘the historic built form that characterises the Aldinga Village are absent from the land (immediately) surrounding the Subject Site’. They argue that most of the PDCs as listed in the development plan would not apply to this building given its specific location. The report also quotes many statements from the DAC report for the adjacent OTR application to support their stance.

Onkaparinga Council
Table Section

Table Onka/7 - Historic Conservation Area and Local Heritage Places Design Guidelines

Component / Aspect / Issue	Guidelines for Development
Roof form and pitch	Don't span roofs too far otherwise the height of the roof will look out of proportion.

Figure 7.35: Sample diagram of design guidelines from City of Onkaparinga’s Development Plan 2013

(Source: Onkaparinga Council Development Plan consolidated on 19 September 2013, p. 458)

The development application report does admit that the subject site sits in a complex array of policies that are supposed to guide the built form. There are many overlays of zone, policy area, precinct and conservation areas, each with their own desired character and design guidelines.

Thus, it would seem that the design guidelines (as shown in figure 7.35) in the development plan should address not only infill development but also standalone sites like that of Aldi. That could lead to more peaceful negotiations and solutions towards a development that would not only compliment the local cultural landscapes, but also appeal to the sentiments of the local communities. The local community members should not feel the need to agitate to get their ideas across.

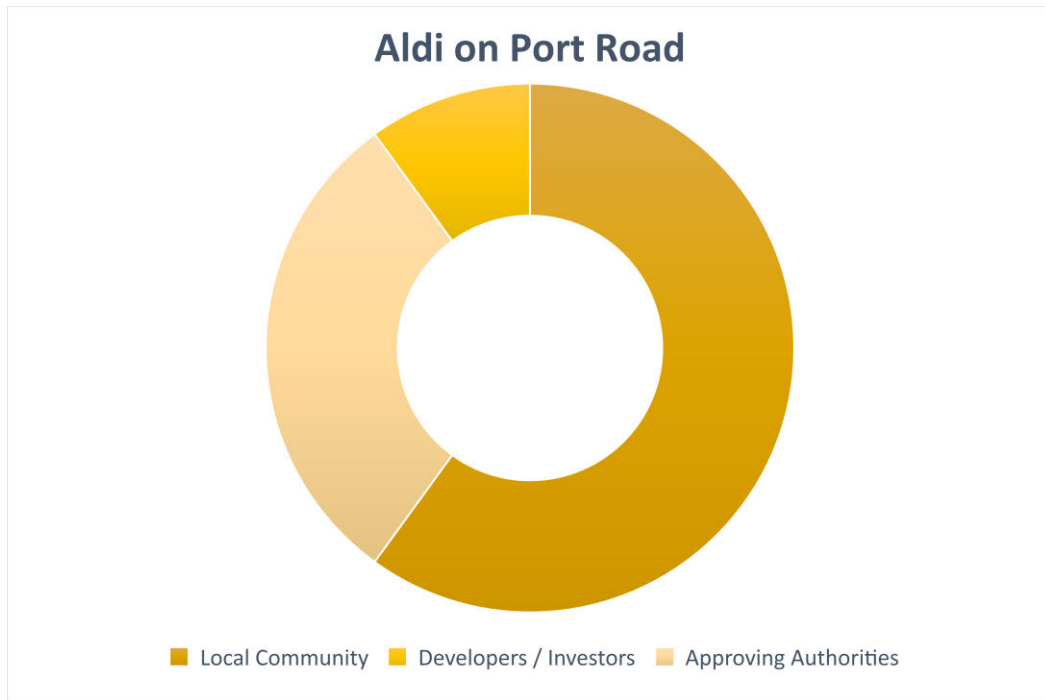


Figure 7.36: Chart depicting level of stakeholder engagement for Aldi

To summarise, it is evident that the development of Aldi triggered some grassroots activism where local community members voiced their objections in the media, by way of representations and even collecting enough money to take the matter to ERD court. Plotting these voices and responses by the developers and local authorities on to a pie chart (as shown in figure 7.36) indicates that the local community was heavily engaged in ensuring a built form that complied with local character, whether the development by-laws were sympathetic or not.

7.4.5 Willunga High Street Upgrade—Willunga

Willunga High Street boasts of many heritage listed places, buildings from the 1870's that still stand today (figure 7.37). The hub of the township—the high street—has undergone significant changes through the decades and has managed to retain its historic character. Heritage buildings such as the Willunga Hotel, former police station and courthouse, and former post office, as well as a lodge, inn and bakery, contribute significantly to the streetscape, but also important is the strategically positioned street giving an illusion that the street will lead all the way to the shore. There is also the aspect of 'materiality of place', with its locally sourced slate used in the sidewalks and extensive water management systems including dry stone drains, culverts and stormwater gutters.



Figure 7.37: Above: Photograph (2017) showing Willunga High Street upgrade works near Heritage Building Willunga Hotel. Below: archival photo of Willunga Hotel in 1936
 (Source: current image (above): author; archival image: <https://collections.slsa.sa.gov.au/resource/B+31799>)

Willunga High Street (figures 7.38, 7.39) begins at a five-way intersection in the centre of the town and runs south-east uphill to the former police station and courthouse, continuing into Old Willunga Hill Road. This short stretch of about half a kilometre packs into it a very intensive ‘sense of place’ for local businesses and residents. The current upgraded version

of the street has strived to capture the essence of local narratives, stories, natural history, settlement past and contemporary future (Holmes 2019). The project has had its fair share of complications, particularly around community engagement; community inputs; and conflict within the community on design intent, process and implementations.



Figure 7.38: Willunga High Street marked on Google Maps



Figure 7.39: Willunga High Street and WGV (Source: marked up Google Maps)

Willunga High Street, particularly the Willunga High Street commercial area, is part of the Willunga Historic Conservation Zone Policy Area established a couple of decades ago. There are six (out of 26 in the whole region) places on Willunga High Street that are listed in the State Heritage Register.

The 1997 Willunga District Heritage Survey recommended a streetscape improvement program for Willunga High Street to focus on the early buildings that had been altered by changes to shopfronts and verandahs to retain the historic character of Willunga.



Figure 7.40: Photographs (2022) showing Willunga High Street upgrade completed (Source: author)

Completed in June 2018, Willunga High Street upgrade took a long time to be planned, going back and forth from the drawing board to the community and back to the drawing board. The City of Onkaparinga appointed independent consultants WAX Design and Mulloway Studio for landscape and place-making to refine the designs in consultation with the community. The final outcome includes upgraded footpaths that incorporate locally sourced slate, new plantings, grassed areas, irrigation systems, and many artworks and sculptures (as shown in figure 7.40). The design won South Australian Landscape Architecture Awards in

Cultural Heritage Award of Excellence for Willunga Mainstreet Project that *‘transformed the town centre into a beautifully crafted setting that evokes Willunga’s natural history, local stories, settlement past and contemporary future’* (Architecture & Design, 2018)

In November 2011, City of Onkaparinga set out to conduct a community engagement activity with key stakeholders regarding design elements for Willunga High Street upgrade. Later, around late 2015, the council resolved to establish a community reference group called Willunga Streetscape Design Reference Group to review the detailed tree removal and replacement program. Representatives from community stakeholder groups and the broader community were invited to nominate representatives to participate in the group. The group was set up by February 2016.

The upgrade project was finally completed in June 2018 at the cost of \$2.8 million. The stakeholders were invited to provide feedback, and by January 2019, from the review, it was noted by the council that a few additional minor works needed to be undertaken.

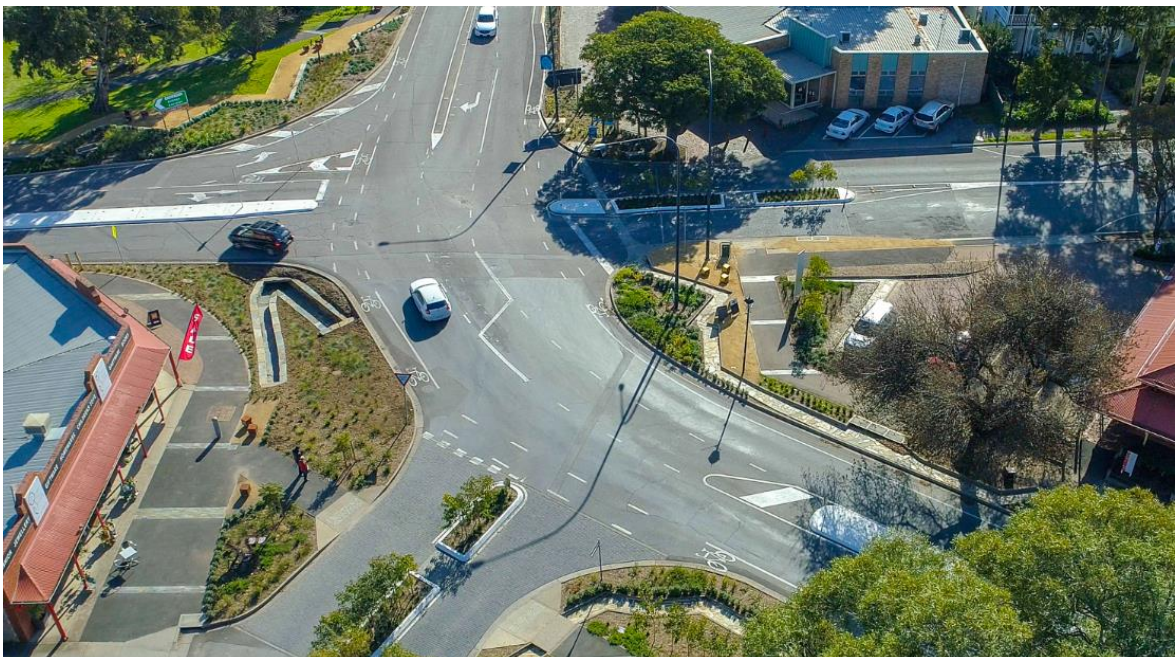


Figure 7.41: Aerial view of landscape at Willunga High Street intersection
(Source: <https://waxdesign.com.au/projects/willunga-mainstreet/>)

One of the respondents, David Gill (RC21), shared his knowledge of the design process, which was riddled with conflicts within the community, where the business owners did not want any change, while some of the community members preferred to ‘soften’ and create a better ‘sense of place’. The biggest frustrations for the community, he narrates, were that

although a lot of people were involved, most of the community felt they had been blocked out of the design process; the loss of detail; and the amount of time the project took. The end result, however, did not justify the time or the money spent, where the streetscape looks way too formal compared with the more natural and organic nature of the township itself.

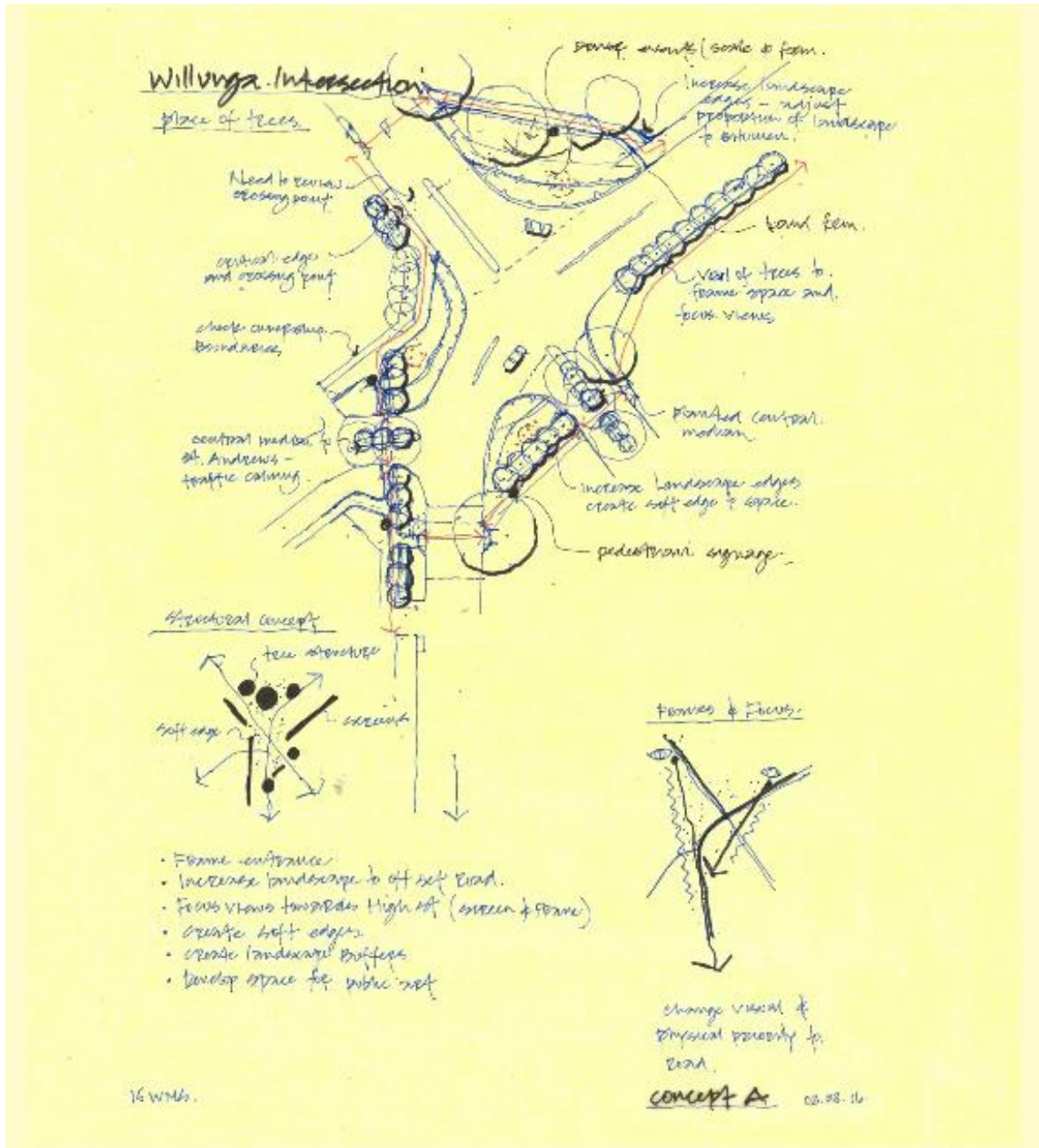


Figure 7.42: Design concepts for Willunga High Street intersection
 (Source: <https://waxdesign.com.au/projects/willunga-mainstreet/>)

Another respondent, Yvonne McGrotty (RC19), recalls that the local representative group was set up very hurriedly, which led to the difference in opinion within the community. She

admits that as a group, the community failed to provide ‘one voice’ to the council. The differences between Onkaparinga Council and Willunga residents were not resolved. An opportunity to negotiate was lost. For the council, this was a project with a start and a finish date, with probably an intent to attract tourism, but for the local community, there is no beginning or end, this is part of their life—their space, their town and their street—and they live with this. They will live with the difference in opinion; they will live with the outcomes of the upgrades whether they agree with it or not, and they will live with the concern that their place may have been taken over. She compares the situation in other tourist places such as Hahndorf, and feels that the main street there is a place for tourists to go to, not for the local residents to go to; on the other hand, Willunga High Street has always been the place the local community goes to; it belongs to them. Hence, the concern is that with the new upgrade, local community might feel like their place might have been taken over. Respondent Chris Collin (RC20) says there is a feeling of resigned acceptance with the high street upgrade project.

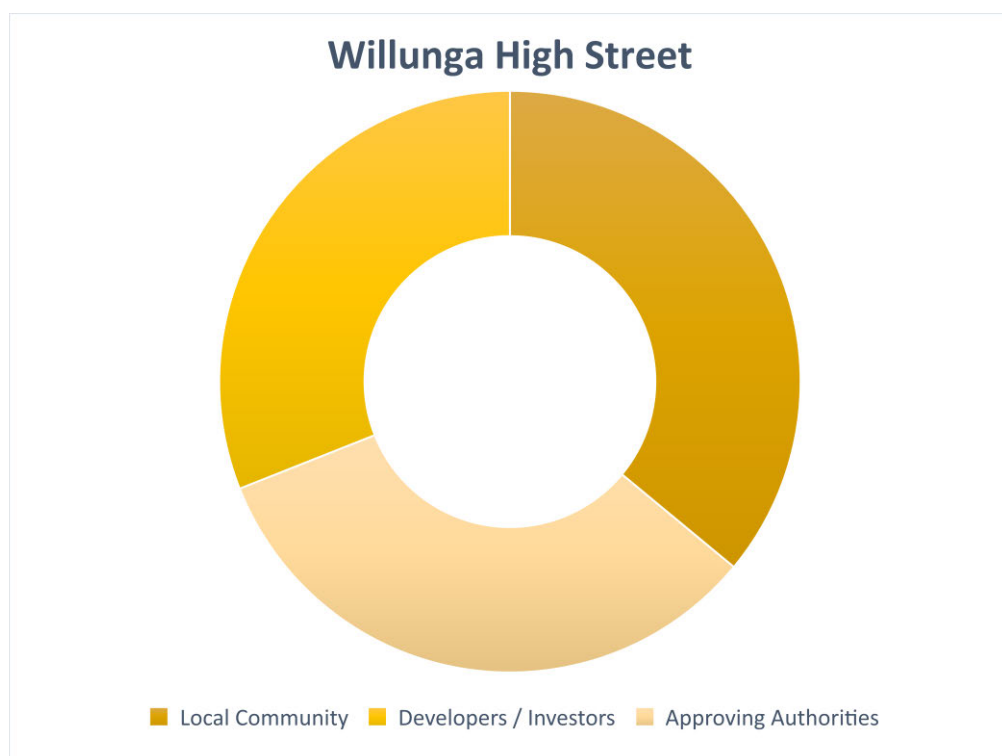


Figure 7.43: Chart depicting stakeholder engagement for Willunga High Street

To summarise, it is evident that the upgrade of Willunga High Street, although highly contested, was fairly well managed by the local council by setting up a committee with good representation from the local community. In this example, the local council, City of

Onkaparinga was the developer as well as the approving authority, and the keen interest demonstrated by the local council to work cohesively with the local community members makes this pie chart (figure 7.43) closer to the theoretical ideal similar to Willunga Garden Village example as seen in section 7.4.1.

7.4.6 Mixed-Use Development (Latitude)—Aldinga

In 2017, private developer Winwest Pty Ltd submitted an application to construct a mixed-use development comprising four- and six-storey buildings in a residential zone with a medium-density policy and target infill precinct (as shown in figures 7.44 to 7.47). The newly updated Onkaparinga City Development Plan, which encompassed the development site, encouraged medium-density residential development of up to three storeys in this precinct. However, this proposal included three buildings of four storeys and one building of six storeys including rooftop outdoor communal space. The six-storey building with rooftop outdoor communal space would be exceeding the provisioned building height by almost 70%. This triggered a strong community response opposing the ‘high rise’ development. This objection was also supported by the local council—City of Onkaparinga. The applicant was driven back to the drawing board four times to review their proposal and address concerns raised by the community and local council. The local council appealed the initial SCAP approval of the proposal at the ERD Court and finally came to a compromise in October 2020 to accept three three-storey buildings and one four-storey building. The community, although disappointed, has accepted this final proposal, saying ‘not the best outcome, but at least it is better than what was initially proposed’. The developer and Australian Government architect deem that Aldinga will benefit from this development and is complying with the council’s development plan of three-storey buildings in the policy area.



Figure 7.44: Mixed-Use Development

(Source: Facebook group, also sighted by author in DA Application during consultation period)



Figure 7.45: Location of Mixed-Use Development overlooking Willunga Escarpment (Source: author)

The development proposal was submitted to the SCAP because the scale of the project was much higher than what the local council (City of Onkaparinga) were authorised to handle. Local councils in South Australia are allowed to accept development applications only under \$3 million, and if there are grounds to believe that development proposals are of economic significance to the state, then the application can be submitted to the SCAP instead of the local council.

Statutory regulations warranted a category three public notification and the panel received a total of 70 representations across both periods of public notification—44 opposing the proposal and 26 in support of the development. Being an adjoining landowner, City of Onkaparinga had an opportunity to submit a representation raising concerns over the scale of development, car parking, and the need for good connectivity between the site and the public realm. The council assessed that the proposed building heights were ‘significant departures’ from the development plan and ‘difficult to support’, and considered it ‘incongruent to have buildings taller than the maximum sought in a District Centre Zone directly opposite’.



Figure 7.46: Mixed-use Development

(Source: Facebook group, also sighted by author in DA Application during consultation period)



Figure 7.47: Location of proposed Mixed-Use Development

(Google Maps marked up)

After the initial hearing of representations, where concerns were expressed over excessive building heights, out of character with the locality; overlooking and intrusion; insufficient sunlight to adjacent allotments during winter solstice; and traffic congestion/car parking

issues, the SCAP proposed that the developers go back to the drawing board, consider reducing the scale of the development and address concerns raised by the community. Winwest resubmitted their application, with changes to their proposal. The new proposal consisted of one building of five-storey height, two buildings of four-storey height and one building of three-storey height.

The amended proposal was again put up for public notification, where 33 new representations were submitted. The older 54 representations remained valid for evaluation. This time around, after hearing all the representations, 17 of which were received during both periods of public notification, the SCAP recommended that the panel grant consent for the development proposal. The panel reasoned that ‘being a prominent site and functioning as a gateway to the Aldinga Beach foreshore and District Centre, the excess building height would provide a positive and successful design outcome’. The panel addressed the issue of car parking as ‘there would be adequate car park on-site and also along Sunset Parade (a public road)’. The panel further addressed the concerns of overlooking and overshadowing by saying ‘it would be tolerable due to the separation distance between the proposed buildings and existing private open space provided by Sunset Parade’.

The City of Onkaparinga backed by the Aldinga Bay Residents Association appealed this decision by the SCAP at the ERD Court. Winwest went back to the drawing board, revised the proposal, and met with the City of Onkaparinga Council to compromise to ‘settle’ the appeal and avoid a hearing. However, the council, after careful consideration of the revised plans against the development plan and District Centre Zone policies, concluded that they would not approve the plan and referred back to the ERD Court to consider the appeal. Winwest went back to the drawing board yet again.

After almost 3 years of negotiations between the developers, approving authorities and local community members, the ERD Court mediated a closed-door negotiation between City of Onkaparinga and Winwest and approved the final proposal of three three-storey buildings and one four-storey building. The community, although not very happy with the final decision, seems to have come to accept the negotiated new proposal of lesser building heights and increased on-site parking.

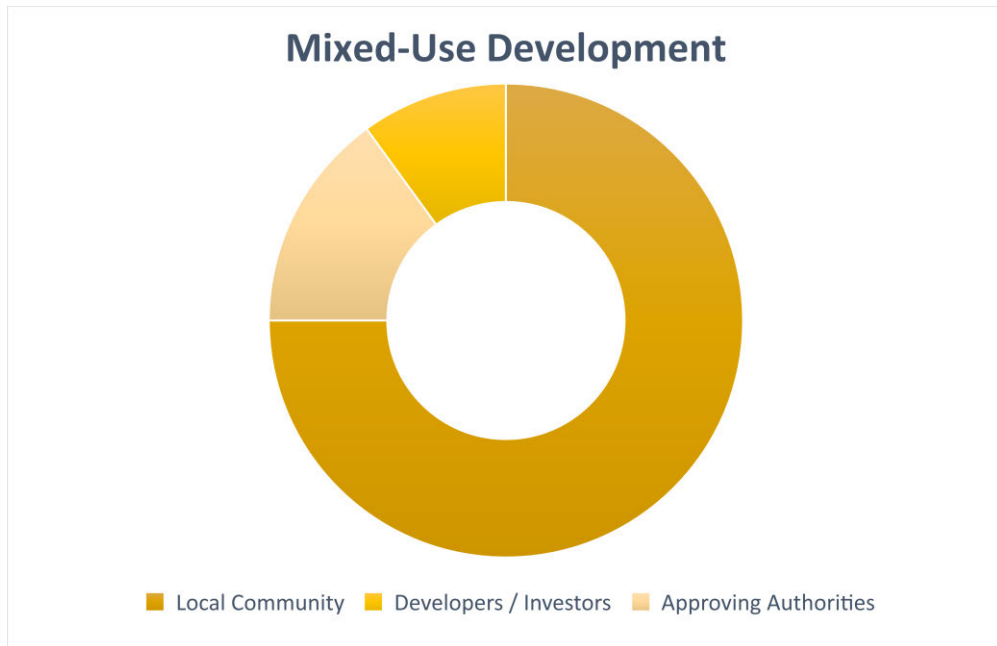


Figure 7.48: Chart depicting level of stakeholder engagement for Mixed-Use Development

Overall, it is evident that the proposal of Mixed-Use Development triggered a lot of grassroots activism and plotting the observations on a pie chart (Figure 7.48) shows that local community were heavily engaged in ensuring a built form that complies fairly with local character.

7.5 In Summary

This section now applies the four quadrant analytical tool (as shown in figure 7.49) to assess the success of each of the case studies as per the criteria set in Section 6.5, namely ‘Quality of Proposal’ plotted on the horizontal axis and ‘Community Interest’ plotted on the vertical axis.

Sunday Estate, Aldi, the mixed-use development and Willunga High Street upgrade exhibited high community interest, with a lot of representations and submissions during the public consultation period and ongoing protests after decisions were made if the community did not agree, sometimes by petitioning in the ERD Court or by forming a human barrier on the construction site, and hence lie in the ‘highly contested’ quadrant. Willunga Garden Village and Aldinga Arts Eco Village, two very similar projects on either side of the urban growth boundary, interestingly did not raise much opposition from the community, and hence lie in the ‘easy win’ quadrant. With OTR and Desired Character DPA, on the other hand, although they raised community interest, not much was changed in the final outcome.

The signage size and colours for OTR did change but the building envelope and roof type remained fairly close to the original proposal, and hence, OTR has been assigned to the ‘average’ quadrant.

In the case of Aldi, the community chose to settle outside the court after the developers proposed a new design for the building incorporating a few architectural elements such as pitched roof, verandah, larger setback and earth colours finishes. For the community, these elements are in line with their sense of local character and semi-rural typology of the Aldinga township. In the case of the mixed-use building, the community were not entirely happy with the ERD Court’s decision but accepted it; however, it remains to be seen if the developers will find the reduced size of the building to be still financially viable and will go ahead with building it as per the approved building height and reduced number of saleable floor area.



Figure 7.49: Four quadrant analytical chart for assessing the case studies

The most complex of all the case studies is the Willunga High Street upgrade. This is a project that engaged with the community regularly for a very long time, and there is still some unrest among the community. Simplistically viewed, the framework assigns the value of ‘low quality of proposal’ because the design evolved over many phases of community

engagement, and although it can be considered a ‘highly contested project’, the analytical framework used in this research does not quite capture the issues associated with the final outcome—where most of the interview respondents expressed unhappiness with the final outcome.

Applying the second analytical tactic of using pie charts to depict levels of engagement of each stakeholder group, the below figure shows all the charts stacked next to each other to compare the values (in figure 7.50). As can be deduced from the comparison, Willunga Garden Village and Willunga High Street projects are quite close to the theoretical ideal, while the local community is more heavily invested in the Mixed-Use Development and Sunday Estate projects prompting intense grassroots activism. OTR and Aldi are also seen to be projects where the community took keen interest in prompting mild grassroots activism, without which the outcomes would not have been favourable. However, the community did not engage in intense activism since the developer’s level of engagement increased and can be attributed to their awareness / consciousness of the community’s intentions to resort to intense activism if required.

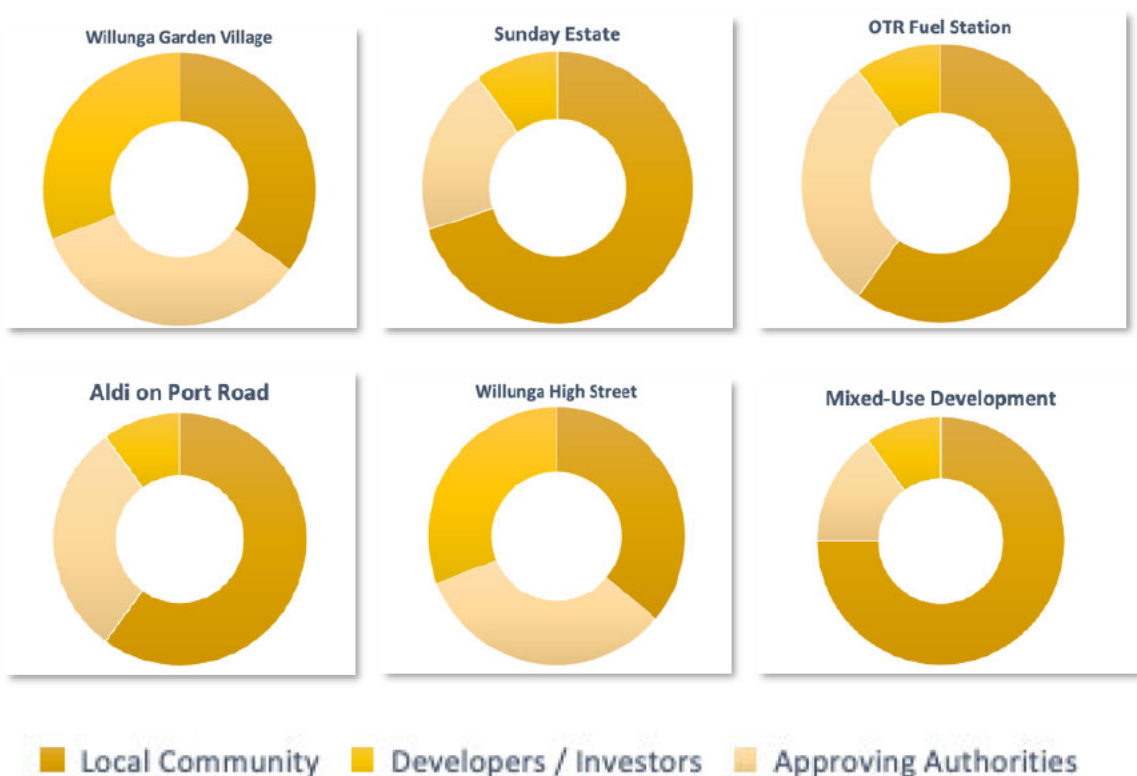


Figure 7.50: Comparing levels of stakeholder engagement in each case study

The comparative charts are an indicative representation of the level of engagement and do not demonstrate the success of the project in terms of aligning with local character. Success of the projects have been plotted in the four-quadrant chart (figure 7.49). These charts do not complete the narrative and further analysis of the findings have been discussed in the following Chapters. Chapter 8 draws upon the findings, analysing not only the case studies and data collected from semi-structured interviews, but also from the close study of development plans, archival data and media discussions. Finally, Chapter 9 forms conclusions based on the analysis from Chapter 8.

Chapter 8: Contextualising Local Character in the Willunga Basin: Towards a Bioregional Consciousness

This chapter builds on the previous chapter and analyses the original findings of this research arising from the semi-structured interviews, close study of development plans and amendments and case studies. This concluding discussion considers how these can be interpreted to answer the primary question: How does architectural identity, as a tangible component of local character, provoke the consciousness of a local community to frame sustainable urban development policies at the rural–urban fringe?

As established in Chapter 7, the local Willunga Basin community is very vigilant and can be recognised as a ‘conscious’ community that places a high value on the local character of the basin. When urbanisation projects proposed either by the local council or by private developers and landowners threaten this local character, the community comes together to debate the impact and collectively engage with the authorities to guide, nudge, oppose and resort to activism if required to ensure that the projects align with shared aspirations for the bioregion.

This thesis demonstrates that the legislative intent cannot be addressed by check box systems alone, but also require active and complex participation of all stakeholders. This research has sought to unpack the urban development history of the Willunga Basin and its townships through the investigation of development policies, projects and considerations of the impact of community voices on development practices, focusing specifically on community perceptions, values and consciousness-raising provoked by debates about local architectural character.

Returning now to the principles of bioregionalism as the theoretical framework of analysis engaged in this study, it is important to recognise and discuss how ‘local character’ in the understanding of a conscious local community is, evidently, a more complicated notion than mere questions of appropriate architectural form or detail. Rather, it appears to infer a deeper, more embedded knowledge or sense of fit, where the right, or ‘correct’, architectural typologies for the region are seemingly understood to be ‘symbiotic’ with both the natural (geographical, geological, climatological, etc.) and the cultural (human, agrarian, urban, etc.) elements and order of the landscape.

Further, having observed various notions, concepts and applications of public participation processes, it is important now to discuss how this research has identified various gaps in the capacity of those processes to translate local knowledge and community aspirations into urban development projects. This study demonstrates the attitudes towards urban development and the management of place identities at the rural–urban fringe of a metropolitan city. Through critical analyses of the responsibilities and limitations of the authorities and the local community voices, this study identifies a third very important but passive player who has the most influence and benefits the most—the developers. The thesis finally sets forth further research questions to investigate the role and responsibilities of the developer in safeguarding the intent of these legislative instruments towards a sustainable future.

Grassroots activism is one of the strong traits of people living in the Willunga Basin, mostly around urbanisation development practices that take away the essence of their local character and interfere with their sense of pride in the region. Planning boundaries and strikingly different development policies are intended to develop the townships of Willunga and Aldinga in opposite directions. The region within which Aldinga township is located is meant for urban growth, while the region within which Willunga township is located is meant to mitigate urbanisation. The *Local Character Preservation Act* protects Willunga township from growing outwards and falling prey to unprecedented urbanisation practices. This Act helps to protect the very important food-growing region, whereas the urban growth boundary separates Aldinga township and its surrounds, marking it for future urbanisation, with medium-density policies already coming into play.

Both Aldinga and Willunga townships are part of the same bioregion—the Willunga Basin—and long-time residents of the basin consider themselves part of the same community, with a strong sense of belonging and affection for their region. These planning boundaries drawn on a map, especially the one drawn in the 1960s—the urban growth boundary, have set the townships and their immediate surroundings in opposing trajectories of urbanisation practices.

The following sections analyse in detail the findings of various data that were collected and collated to address the secondary questions.

8.1 Local Character—Recognising and Retaining

This section discusses the findings of the first research question:

How is local character recognised in urban development policies and what instruments are in place to retain it in the context of development pressure and potential conflicts at the rural–urban fringe?

As shown in Chapter 4, the theories of bioregionalism and bioregional planning principles reinforce the fact that ‘local character’ plays a significant role in grounding people to places, giving them a sense of belonging, a sense of place and a place identity. These intangible values, which are difficult to measure, in turn assign an inherent sense of protectiveness and long-term planning. It enables people to understand the value of depleting resources, evaluate local carrying capacities of their regions and appreciate sustainable development goals. It has been established that communities that value local character are communities that are conscious of bioregional planning principles, whether or not they use this exact phrase. Thus, local character plays an important part in sustainable development.

However, Chapter 7 shows that merely recognising the value of retaining local character is not enough. There are huge gaps between the visionary statements of policy documents and the instruments of development control, which would have led to loss of these local characters, if not for the conscious community that intervened at various stages to uphold these local characters.

Conflicts at the rural–urban fringe come into play because of differences not only in lifestyles but also in the sense of and attachment to local character. This is clearly visible at the urban growth boundary between Aldinga and Willunga in the basin. These conflicts are accentuated by the fact that this basin is habited by a conscious community that tirelessly continues to fight for its rural ways of life and sense character and place attachment.

The *Local Character Preservation Act 2013*, although addressing the character of the local cultural landscape within its boundaries of McLaren Vale and Willunga, does not address the development controls of its immediate neighbour Aldinga, which is marked for urban growth but identifies itself as part of the same landscape. The local community, although sympathetic to the needs of urban growth, question the type of development and architectural typologies being introduced, which have ‘no character’ in their collective opinion. They

resist the global cookie-cutter urban development,, which erodes their sense of place and local character.

This shows that gaps exist between the policy and the practice for recognising and retaining local character; the instrument of control to recognise and retain local character is not foolproof; and development, if not checked by the conscious community, could turn this region into an unrecognisable suburb that could exist anywhere in the world.

8.2 Conflicts over Legislated Public Notification Methods and Community Voices Going Unheard

This section discusses the findings of the second research question:

What are the benefits and limitations of public participation tools and tactics currently in use in the Willunga Basin to mediate the interpretation of urban development policies in practice by local communities (bottom-up) as well as responsible authorities (top-down)?

To answer the first part of the question, the researcher investigated the regulations and legislated allowances provided in planning policies and development plans for a formal process of ‘public notifications’, ‘community engagement’ and ‘accepting representations.’ For the second part of the question, the researcher gathered data from social groups, media articles and face-to-face conversations to understand the informal tools and tactics exercised by the communities for grassroots level activism.

Schedule 9 of the *South Australian Development Regulations 2008* dictates that the local government (council) ‘may be obliged to publicly notify relevant development applications like dwellings, alterations to dwellings, change of use of land etc; so that people who could potentially be affected by the proposed development would have an opportunity to comment’. This is generally done by placing an advertisement in a popular newspaper, mailing letters to adjoining property owners, and possibly by advertising in other popular media. The legislated minimum requirement for public notification is by newspaper advertisement and by publishing information on the local council website (going forward this will be on PlanSA website). The intention is that the process allows for adjoining and nearby property owners to look at the applications, consider possible impacts that the proposed development might have on them, and provide comments/opinions about the

development in support of or against the development. Assuming this is an efficient means of engaging with the ‘stakeholders’, this would seem like a fair way for the council to gather information and become aware of the possible impact of a proposed development on the people living in the vicinity of the proposal. However, as seen in the case of the Latitude development application for a three- or four-storey mixed-use building proposal (as well as other proposals), most residents did not receive any letters in their mailbox and made statements such as ‘Who reads newspapers, and even if we do, who is watching the small corners of fine print to view these advertisements?’, ‘How many people these days actually read those small adverts between the obituaries and sports pages?’ and ‘I believe that there should be greater community consultation with both email mail outs as well as snail mail if required’. Many levels of frustration were noted by the researcher in the data collected—expressed in digital media groups, interviews and the committee meetings conducted by the council. The council/DPTI websites also carry a list of proposals that are currently on ‘public consultation’, and people have the choice to submit their comments in a prescribed format either online or in writing by post or submitted in person. However, this requires someone to be alert and check these websites regularly to stay informed about what is being proposed. In addition, depending on the scale or category of the proposal, different websites are updated, hence the need to check multiple websites. Only a community that is extremely conscious would be able to invest that kind of time and effort.

Clearly, there is a gap in the community engagement process, where the responsible agencies (council or the DPTI, now PlanSA) believe they are doing what is necessary as per legislated processes to engage with the community but the community thinks not enough is being done to keep them informed, let alone be consulted on matters that affect their lives.

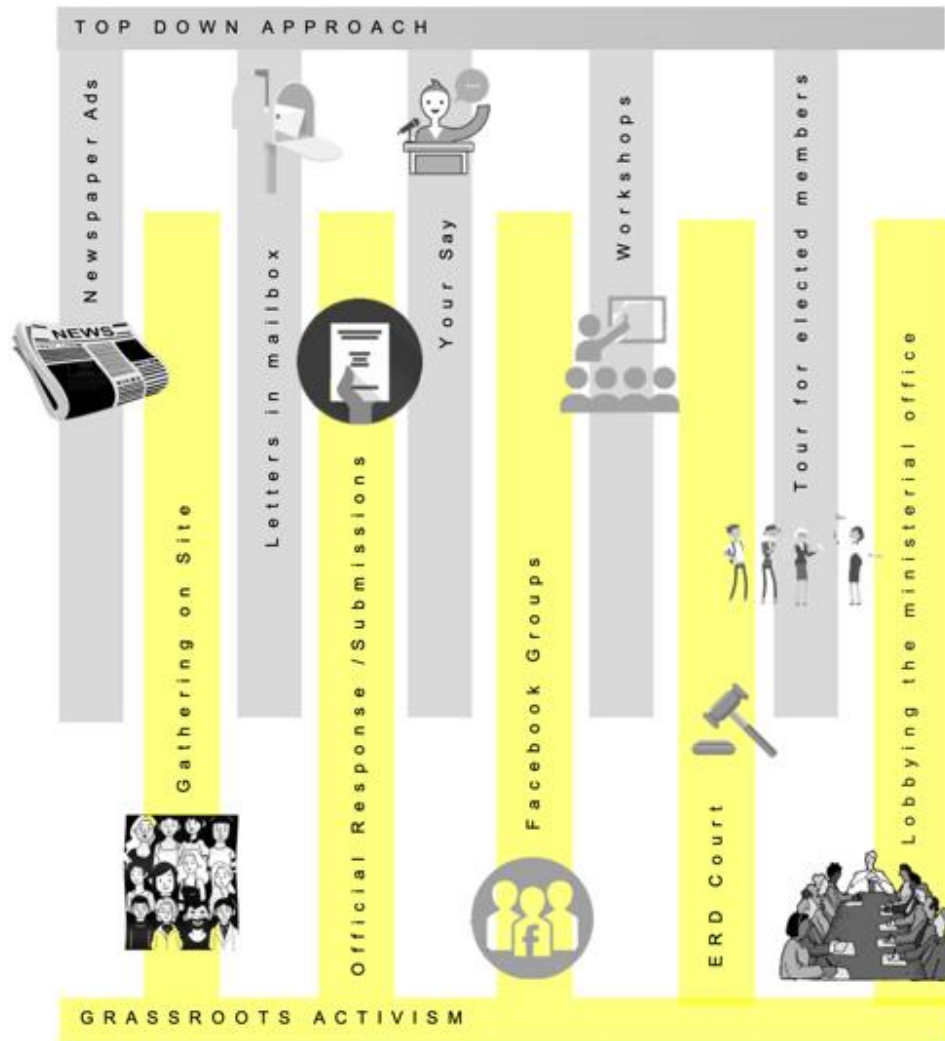


Figure 8.1: Grassroots activism vs Top Down approach (Source: author)

The South Australian Government has also set up an online consultation hub called ‘Your Say’ (State Planning Commission 2019) with the intention to involve South Australians and influence the government in decisions that affect their lives, particularly for matters related to major development proposals or related to policy changes initiated by the government. The website is used by many government departments and agencies to collect feedback on their initiatives, ranging from built environment projects, such as heritage guidelines, planning and design codes, botanic garden masterplan reviews and road duplication projects, to social and environmental initiatives, such as proposed changes to SA’s marine parks, national park management plans, bushfire management plans and youth action plans. It is up to the working groups and appropriate agencies to set up the details of the projects, collect feedback and collate it for review. While this would seem like it should be a very popular way to engage with local communities, it does require certain levels of digital skills and

interest in this mode of engagement. Based on data on their website yoursay.sa.gov.au, contributor numbers ranged from 5 to 25, which implies that this is still not a very pervasive medium of engagement. However, it is assumed that moving forward, this might become a more popular way of engaging with the public.

People have also expressed the desire to improve the consultation/engagement practices by calling the policies and Acts ‘outdated’, and that they should ‘stop dictating how the councils should engage with their communities’ and ‘Section 50 of the Local Government Act is outdated. Covering public consultation/community engagement it dictates councils do minimum engagement when needed and in most cases that a newspaper advert is all that is needed’.

To summarise, it has been recognised that there is a need to update the engagement policies to be more robust and accountable. While there are many legislated provisions to meaningfully engage with the communities, data show that this has not been enough and that the council engages with minimum mandatory tools in order to ‘tick the box’ of having addressed the requirement of public consultation. This leads to discontent amongst conscious communities like in the Willunga Basin leading to unnecessary activism, which could be avoided with better systems in place.

8.3 Cultural Association with Architectural Typologies

This section discusses the findings of the third research question, by analysing the outcomes of community activism on the chosen case studies:

What is the impact of the local community’s consciousness and engagement on the changing architectural and urban design norms of the region, and on its urban development policies more generally?

To answer this question, the researcher selected six projects developed over a period of time and studied the development application, community response during the consultation period, and community response or activism after the development approval was provided, and then analysed community sentiments by the phrases used to describe the quality of the development.

As discussed in Chapter 4, architectural typologies of a place are a very important part of place identities, integral to sense of belonging, and contribute heavily to local character and bioregional urbanism. This section of the thesis analyses community expectations, expressions and activism around local character and architectural typologies of the Willunga Basin based on the findings of case studies, media reports and interviews.

In the cases of the fuel station upgrade (OTR) and Aldi supermarket building, the community had voiced strong objections to the size and scale the buildings, bright colours, roof lines and heights of signages, such as ‘an eyesore’, ‘disregard to land zoning’ and ‘changing the whole feel of the town’ and made requests to ‘get it right’. The community provided statements to the newspapers while holding a helium balloon to show how tall the buildings would be. The community agreed that the land zoning provided specific policies to protect and enhance the local historic architectural characters, but the development proposals that had been approved had ignored these policies and guidelines.

In the case of Aldi, the community did not give up when Onkaparinga Council’s then development assessment panel DAC (now SCAP) supported the plan to build a 1500 square metre supermarket in 2016. The council’s regulation is to limit retail sites to 900 square metres, while this proposal was significantly higher, showing ‘zero regard’ for the council’s development plan. The community was certain that the building and associated tall signage would ruin the ‘country-town’ feel. Members of the local community ‘Friends of Willunga Basin’ put in a further representation to the DAC and expressed their views. This resulted in Aldi going back to the drawing board and changing their design to address the community concerns.

In the case of Latitude’s mixed-use development proposal of a six-storey building, the community strongly objected to the ‘out of character’ design, excessive building heights, overshadowing, intrusion and overlooking. The main objection was that these buildings would block the view of their beloved Willunga escarpment from the District Centre Zone comprising the Aldinga shopping complex, library and other public spaces. Visual connection to Willunga escarpment has a strong socio-cultural significance to the community and contributes to their overall sense of belonging. Hence, blocking that view, especially with a ‘transplanted global’ architectural design, stirred up the community, leading to some strongly worded objections. Their sense of local architectural character and regional character of the place was being challenged. The final approved design still does

not fit in with their sense of country-town character; however, the community has accepted the inevitable transformation of their bioregion space, especially around the district centre.

The interview respondents expressed concerns that Willunga will be ‘Onkaparised’ or ‘suburbanised’, ‘(urbanisation) will take over’, ‘half our councillors are pro development and don’t understand the rural ethos’, ‘[the] fundamental hope is to keep urban areas contained’ and ‘environmental conservists [sic] are a minority’.

The Department of Planning, South Australian Government, prepared a ‘Desired Character Statement Guideline’ in 2010, which provides criteria for local government development plans to state desired character within their policy areas. At the policy area level, two main elements are addressed— ‘pattern of development’ and ‘public realm and scenic prominence’. For pattern of development, topography, landscape and natural features are one of the criteria to be considered, along with size of allotments, subdivision patterns, patterns of buildings, surrounding garden spaces, street layout, and spaciousness versus intimacy of the region. It is interesting to note that under scenic prominence, criteria include ‘views within the area’, ‘views to and from the area’ and ‘landmarks, features, vistas and key buildings’. At the local/street level, there are two elements— ‘built form/character’ and ‘landscaping’. For built form, elements such as ‘siting and setbacks’, ‘building height’, ‘scale and form’, roof form/pitch’, site coverage/rhythm and spacing’, ‘play of light and shade’, ‘materials/colours/textures’, ‘verandahs/porches/balconies’ and ‘simplicity/complexity of detailing’ have been listed to define desired characters.

Although development plans include the above criteria to define ‘desired character’ for each policy area/zone, these criteria do not consider the visual proximity of other policy areas and how they can complement each other. As seen in the case studies, this leads to interpretations from developers/designers that could challenge the community’s view of policy boundaries, which is based on broader holistic regional boundaries. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a wide gap between the intentions of the urban development acts, policies and plans, and what it actually delivers.

8.4 Whose Responsibility Is It?

As has been discovered in all the case studies and planning committee meetings around negotiating development proposals and projects, there are three main groups of stakeholders: approving authorities (who have a responsibility to uphold the interests of all stakeholders within the limitations of legal requirements), local community members (those who are directly affected) and the developers/landowners (who invest time and money to develop the land mainly for economic gains).

It has been observed in the public forums, planning meetings and community engagement sessions, that while the local authorities take part in the sessions, usually minimal and more to meet the mandatory requirements, developers/investors are usually never on the scene, except at the ERD court and planning meetings. Figure 8.2 shows the aggregated values depicted in pie charts depicting level of engagement by each stakeholder group in the six case studies. It is important to note that despite two of the case studies depicting a chart that is close to theoretical ideal, the aggregated chart still depicts a high level of engagement, thus demonstrating a highly invested and conscious community.

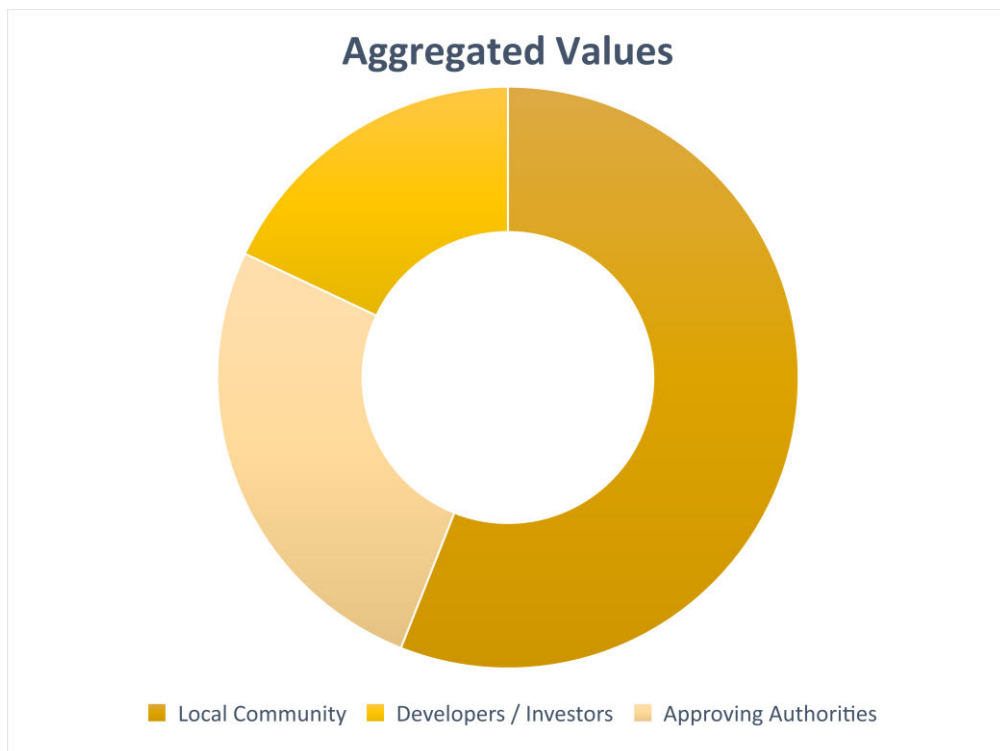


Figure 8.2: Chart depicting level of overall engagement of each stakeholder group as observed in the case studies

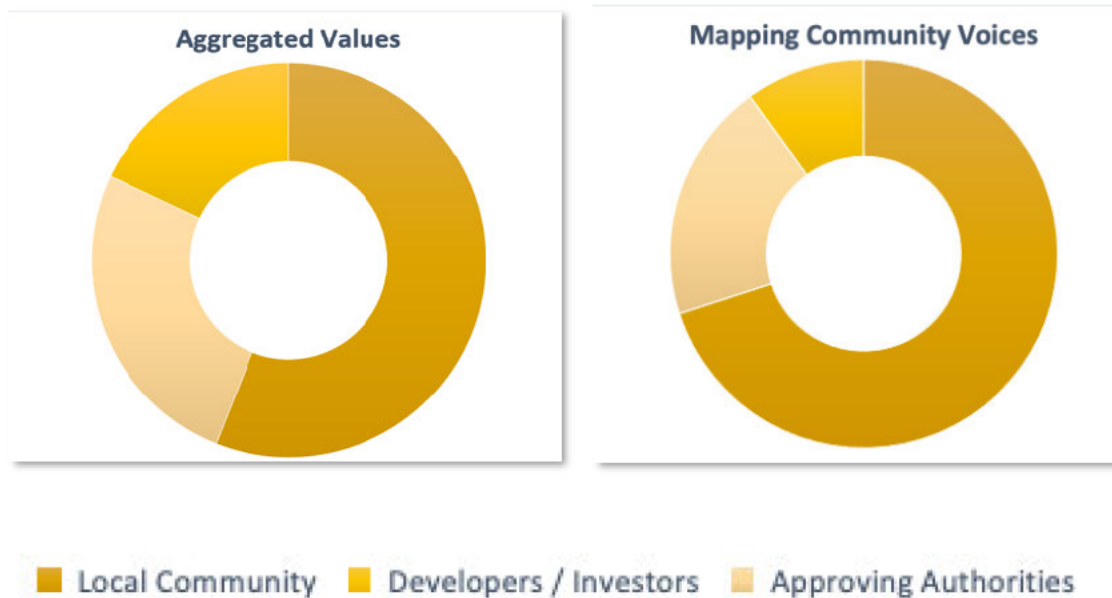


Figure 8.3: Comparing levels of engagement as observed in the case studies vs community perceptions

Figure 8.3 compares the levels of engagement observed in the case studies and as perceived by the community members (interview cohorts). Both charts clearly depict the divide between the level of engagement demonstrated by community members of the Willunga Basin and level of engagement that developers/investors and local authorities have exhibited. While the aggregated values from the case studies indicate that the actual engagement by the community was somewhat less than what those who voluntarily shared their perceptions with the researcher perceived, it is still abundantly clear that community engagement was conspicuously disproportionate with the theoretical ideal where all stakeholders should have had equal levels of engagement. The converse is also unequivocal as both charts depict that the engagement in the process from the developers/investor stakeholders was the least substantial.

Clues to such disproportionate engagement are also evident in comments recorded in the interviews, along with those expressed in social media and consultation webpages: ‘Councils have become very greedy and have formed a bond with developers rather than their rate payers & local community’; ‘community opinion is not encouraged and the Administration are too dominant over decisions’; ‘LG are not made in a way which necessarily reflects community opinion, desires or goals’; ‘I don’t feel that my views are represented’, ‘is seriously failing to respect its statutory requirements with regards to development procedures and processes as far as following legislative procedures and

requirements and responding and communicating with the community’; and ‘consultation with community means nothing if council decisions do not reflect the consultation.’ Comments such as these indicate the high degree of distrust that resides within the community with respect to the development aims and processes of their local councils.

A good example of the value of stakeholder consultation is evident in ACT’s (Canberra’s) quick guide to development applications states the following: ‘*If your development is located in an established area you are strongly encouraged to consult with your neighbours during the design stage to ensure the development proposal considers all of the issues that might arise. Even though neighbour consultation is not statutory it is encouraged and should occur before a DA is lodged with the Planning and Land Authority*’. Despite the intuitively obvious wisdom of such guidelines for best practice, the pattern of engagement and views expressed by the concerned community voices canvassed in this study suggest that neighbours and other groups potentially impacted by new developments are rarely consulted voluntarily. It is evident, however, that the relative abundance of community members in the Willunga Basin who are sufficiently vigilant and conscious of the potential impact of new developments to local character ensures that the community proactively engages with mandated consultation processes, and is ready for a battle where needed. Thus, it would be reasonable to conclude that community members of the Willunga Basin have consciously taken responsibility for scrutinising and guiding urban development in their region and have made the Basin an exemplar of bioregional urbanism. However, it is equally apparent that such conscious communities do not exist everywhere.

8.5 Political Intent or Stakeholders’ Visions?

As shown in Chapter 7, there have been various attempts to protect and preserve the bioregion from rapid urbanisation and to seek new locations for urban growth in the context of policies to increase the population of South Australia. While the urban growth boundary marks Aldinga and surrounds for urbanisation activities, Willunga and surrounds are protected from urbanising by the *Local Character Preservation Act*. However, the region has constantly expressed their desire to stay semi-rural and has fought to maintain their country-town character. Particularly in Aldinga and Aldinga Beach, as seen in the case studies, the community has accepted inevitable urban growth, but continues to demand regionally appropriate development with buildings and urban spaces that tie in with their sense of architectural typologies, protect their scrubland and enhance the natural ecosystems

nearby; more open spaces in the new neighbourhood designs; and preservation of elements of heritage value.

As discussed in the previous chapters, various planning strategies for Adelaide metropolitan area from 1962 until the most recent planning and design code of 2020 have all emphasised ‘sense of place’, ‘sense of belonging’, ‘significance of local character to its people’ and ‘reflect local neighbourhood characteristics’, and aimed the planning policies to ‘preserve local character’, ‘respond to local built and environmental characteristics’, ‘reinforce local identities’ and ‘reinforce sense of place’, through ‘urban design guidelines that reflect community values’, ‘evaluating community opinion on matters of neighbourhood character and design’ and ‘promoting good design awareness’.

The latest strategy (PDI Act of 2016, commenced in 2021) for development includes ‘master planned neighbourhoods on the urban fringe’ and that post-consultation amendments discuss character area statements to include localised policies that reflect neighbourhood characteristics.

However, as Iwanicki (RC01) deliberated, ‘There can be as many planning strategies and as many investigative reports as one likes, but unless it gets inscribed in the legislation it is all useless’. While it can be argued that planning and desired character can mainly exist as suggested guidelines, with the expectation that the developers/landowners will do due diligence to the place and community, it has been observed in all the case studies and various community voices that this is not always the case. When a conscious community such as that in the Willunga Basin face so many challenges in getting their voice heard for a design that honours local character, and experience a turbulent process of engagement with the development approval authorities, what hope can be had for local character or sustainable practices to be upheld in bioregions where the communities lack consciousness or interest in their surroundings or long-term future? This highlights the need for the legislative instruments to incorporate better methods to articulate local character and bring the developers on board to develop a bioregion in meaningful and sustainable ways.

8.6 Not Just Buildings but Building Blocks of Distinctive Communities

Two years since the issue of the multi-storey building proposal at Aldinga peaked, the development remains locked in dispute. This research, however, is more concerned with the problematic concept of ‘local character’ and the instruments of community engagement related to such proposals that threaten to change this ‘local character’. While development plans, consultant studies, panel reports, developer proposals and architect designs render ‘character’ as a set of physical elements that, according to them, are being addressed, the ways in which ‘character’ is experienced by the local community are more intangible. The community, on the other hand, does not separate the social and emotional experience from the physical environment. These strong associations between the social and physical realms, and emotional value of visual connections from Aldinga to Willunga escarpment, suggest that ‘character’ cannot be reduced to a set of physical elements or standard templates, enabling claims that ‘desired character [is] not applicable’ to a particular land use zone (as seen in the case of Aldi).

Enforcing ‘desired character’ in planning and development codes has not been very successful to date, given that the instruments to capture ‘desired character’ still rely heavily on physical elements, and socio-cultural associations with the built environment are primarily ignored, leading to community activism. For the community, these are not just buildings but an extension of their identities and socio-cultural associations. There is pride, although there is no direct ownership; there is identity, although there are no real tangible elements; there are social connections, although there are misaligned voices; and most importantly there is the desire to stay primarily rural and resist any tendency to become yet another suburb. Current processes of planning and development tend to separate the social from physical, which renders the whole exercise of community engagement futile.

In the case of Willunga High Street, the intent was to create a welcoming but practical streetscape. The upgrade took away some street parking, which caused some conflict among regular local visitors, but the authorities maintain that it was not about being anti-vehicle, but about creating ‘pro-people’ streets and some compromises have to be made. The locals were concerned that with fewer parking spaces, visitors would start to invade the surrounding streets to find easy places to park. Concerns were also expressed that although there was an intention to incorporate local feel in the design, the final outcome did not meet

that goal. The street artefacts could belong to any suburb in any developed country, and none would be the wiser.

8.7 Transcending Political Boundaries and Zoning Codes

Individual case studies within the region have established that political and zoning boundaries and the policies and codes that guide development can be manipulated (by the developers), amended (by the councils) and transcended (with enough community voices) to create buildings, spaces and neighbourhoods that are more in line with the local character and principles of what could be described as bioregional urbanism. There is no excuse to design and build badly. However, this does not have to be a tedious effort or a frustrating experience. If done correctly, if local community aspirations and their cultural associations with their surroundings are captured well at the beginning, and the community is engaged appropriately in subsequent development and adaptations, then there can be tolerable and even pleasant outcomes.

Residents of Willunga township and those living within the ‘local character preservation act boundary’ have no obligation to worry about what happens in Aldinga/Aldinga Beach. However, they see themselves as part of the larger community, as part of the community inhabiting the whole of the Willunga Basin and, hence, express a sense of protectiveness and more holistic understanding of how further development should be approached. They are concerned about the type of developments that are proposed anywhere in the region. They sometimes initiate these voices of dissent themselves, sometimes supporting actively and sometimes providing moral support when the regulatory frameworks restrict them from taking an active part in the engagement process. For them, political boundaries and zoning codes are mere lines and words that assist in governance. In what may, arguably, be a bioregional understanding of place, such constructed or conventional boundaries do not delimit this inclusive ‘local’ community’s sense of belonging and community spirit.

The case studies of OTR in Aldinga, Aldi supermarket at Aldinga, Sunday Estate and the Latitude mixed-use development—although located within the urban growth boundary, where the development codes and policies allow for standard global designs to be followed—were eventually built to suit the local characteristics, honouring their socio-cultural associations with the region’s characteristics and maybe even improving the country-town feeling. These are valuable cases that, although a result of community activism

and persistence, show that successful urban development, in bioregional terms, mainly demands good communication and engagement tactics with the local residents, especially in a conscious community such as the Willunga Basin.

In contrast, the cases of the Willunga Main Street upgrade and Willunga Garden Village suggest that sometimes community engagement tactics may be quite challenging, and require a certain level of authoritative intervention to ensure positive outcomes. In these cases, there were no challenges from the development policies or codes, but just a matter of winning the confidence of the community over what is good design, what is required and how to move forward.

In summary it has been established that a conscious community such as that of the Willunga Basin addresses problems of a global nature with a heightened sensibility for the local. The story of Willunga suggests that greater engagement and consciousness on the part of all stakeholders in development processes can only lead to more successful outcomes, particularly where artificially determined planning boundaries threaten to rupture the organic holism of self-evident bioregions.

Chapter 9: A Nuanced Approach to Urbanisation of the Fringe: Conclusion

This research was an empirical examination of the instruments of stakeholder engagement in the context of urbanisation at the fringe and its impact on local character and urban development policies and practices. Through the literature review, case study research, close study of development plans and official records, this thesis identifies the gap in public participation in both the top-down approach and grassroots activism, presenting an opportunity to investigate further into a new methodology for engaging with the local community. The gap is conceptualised as misaligned engagement tactics among the stakeholders, and there is a need to share the responsibility of sharing information as well as engage meaningfully with the community.

As presented in Chapter 1 and Chapter 6, this research was conducted to address the primary question:

How does architectural identity, as a tangible component of local character, provoke the consciousness of a local community to frame sustainable urban development policies at the rural–urban fringe?

The following three sub-questions are specific to the study area, the Willunga Basin:

1. How is local character recognised in urban development policies and what instruments are in place to retain it in the context of development pressure and potential conflicts at the rural–urban fringe?
2. What are the benefits and limitations of public participation tools and tactics currently in use in the Willunga Basin to mediate the interpretation of urban development policies in practice by local communities (bottom-up) as well as responsible authorities (top-down)?
3. What is the impact of the local community’s consciousness and engagement on the changing architectural and urban design norms of the region, and on its urban development policies more generally?

While Chapter 8 has discussed the findings to the specific questions above, this final chapter summarises the aims and discusses the overarching conclusions of the research regarding

the relevance of local character in a rapidly urbanising world, and the implications of the present study for further research.

As shown in Chapter 4, while the rationale for turning to the theories of bioregionalism as a guide for a sustainable future is clear, the practice is rather more problematic. Formulating urban development policies for unique regions, particularly those at the fringe of large metropolitan areas, requires a very nuanced approach. The ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach to urban development policies and practices would definitely not be beneficial, neither to the bioregion nor to the state or the nation as a whole. Hence, it is of utmost importance to adopt a localised bioregional urbanism approach to development, especially at the fringe.

9.1 In Conclusion

This research shows that the gap between theoretical ideals of bioregionalism and the practice of urban development at the fringe can be addressed by improving the process of identifying and retaining ‘local character’ through meaningful dialogues among all stakeholders—local communities, developers and approving authorities. In conclusion, the study reveals the critical role that a conscious community plays in bridging the gap between theory and practice in attaining a sustainable balance between urban and rural/regional development, particularly at the rural–urban fringe.

The findings and analysis of the data in this research demonstrate that the intent of policies are quite noble, particularly related to identifying local character, planning for desired character, character preservation, and enhancing local architectural typologies that contribute to sense of place and sense of belonging. However, the regulatory frameworks fail to translate these policies and guidelines successfully into practice. Conflicts with conscious community members and their frustrated levels of engagement have shown that there is a need to improve the techniques of urban development practices in better ways.

Initial research of existing literature suggested that new and innovative ways of engaging with the communities were the way forward, with better technological systems that aid visual understanding and simulations. The findings and analysis of the data, however, suggest that there is a need to relook at the whole process of community engagement and the role of all stakeholders, including the developers, who currently have a passive role in engaging with the community.

While the Willunga Basin has managed to retain most of its character, such as landscape character, architectural scale and form, and environmental benefits, it comes at the cost of a very conscious community struggling to stay aware and engaged with the authorities. This demands a lot of time, effort, emotions and sometimes violent activism from the members of the local community and community groups. In a region where most of its residents could be described, in bioregional terms, as highly aware of their local environment and have aspirations to stay sustainable, if it is still so difficult to retain local identities and character, what hope do we have in regions where people do not have such a collective voice in shaping their environment and future? There are many potential factors that can contribute to such disengagement in the planning process – being ‘new in the region’, for instance, or ‘economically struggling’, ‘culturally ill-equipped’, ‘uneducated’, ‘socially dysfunctional’; or just ‘in it for the profit only’. Nevertheless, this research has shown that lack of community consciousness is another significant layer of vulnerability that may evidently disempower groups and regions in efforts to define and retain local character in the face development pressure and processes.

There is an urgent need to move away from the practice of ‘as long as it ticks the boxes’ to ‘what is the right thing to do?’ or, maybe better, tick the boxes to ensure that the developer is engaging with the community in a positive way, the community is given enough opportunities to engage with their neighbourhood and surroundings, and people are sufficiently informed to understand the importance of their role in the larger community and a harmonious relationship with their bioregion.

This raises the question of who needs to take the initiative to ensure that a region’s identity, character and aspirations are given equal importance for the benefit of a more sustainable future. Whose responsibility is it to consult with the local community, engage meaningfully with them and find a cohesive win-win solution? The local government officials are usually the first point of call; however, as seen in some of the examples and case studies, they are limited by how the regulatory framework is worded and planning, building, participatory and approval processes are managed. Especially when everything comes down to how the policies are written and how the legal system interprets it, it seems unfair to hold the government offices responsible for either approving a bad design proposal or rejecting a fairly good design that does not ‘tick the boxes’.

On the other hand, expecting the local communities to take charge of everything is also impractical. As found in the various media reports, interactions and interviews, the Willunga Basin in general is shaped by a conscious community, with energetic people who have/make time to understand what is happening in their region, are aware of the long-term impacts of certain development policies and projects, and are willing to fight for the cause. However, this might very well be very unique to the Willunga Basin and very few other communities across the world. In many cases around the world, (as indicated in other studies discussed in Chapter 3), communities that are affected the most are usually the ones who do not have a voice or worse still are completely unaware of the impending impact of such urbanisation/development policies and projects.

Who then is in the best position to take responsibility for engaging meaningfully with the community? As seen in Chapter 8, developers/investors are the ones who stand to gain the most financially with these developments, and hence, it might be in their best interest and their responsibility to engage meaningfully with the community to understand their expectations and aspirations, as well as to share their concerns, long-term benefits for the region, etcetera. However, there is the risk that such direct engagement may be manipulated and the community might be coerced into agreeing to proposals that may not meet the overall strategic plans for the region. The best way to work around such risks would be for the approving authorities/government officials such as the local council to mediate all such engagements with the authority and to intervene where necessary to ensure everyone is meeting the legislative requirements without being overtly obsessed with ‘ticking the boxes’.

In summary, the research identifies multiple points of failure:

- mismatch between well-intended development policies and the practice of development approvals
- lack of good reference points to rationalise what elements of the environment, both natural and built, constitute ‘local character’
- production of pedestrian architecture as a result of the above points of failure in the system
- poor mechanisms to conduct meaningful dialogues between keepers of local contextual knowledge and passive developers, who tend to avoid communicating with the local communities unless required

- ineffectual, often tokenistic, community consultation that relies heavily on legislated guidelines to avoid conflicts arising from varied aspirations.

9.2 People as Partners in Decision-Making

This research demonstrates the need to move away from the fragmented approach to how the built environment is being managed to a more holistic approach. The research findings suggest that strategic plans should be the guiding beacon for future amendments in development plans and strategic plans should be revisited regularly. In essence, we have been looking in the wrong direction and holding the wrong people responsible for obtaining community confidence.

As seen in the case of initial proposals for the Aldi store at Aldinga, arguments such as *‘a row of trees creates a visual barrier and hence the change in architectural typology would not directly conflict with the local character of town/streetscape’*²⁸ should not be encouraged. Planners need to be given the power to look beyond such arguments, which inadvertently ‘tick the box’ but devalue the policy and framework that were built to protect and enhance the character of such neighbourhoods and precincts. While the creation of multiple precincts and zones are themselves a problem, it becomes even more problematic when architects and developers misinterpret these guidelines to evade appropriate design and development.

While community engagement/public participation is important, if the instrument of engagement is not carefully selected, it may lead to unnecessary delays and mediocre ‘middle ground’ decisions, as is seen in the case of regeneration of High Street, Willunga. It can be debated that planners and administrators are out of touch with the bioregional features, but it is also possible that citizens are ignorant of long-term implications and realities of their actions on the bioregion. Hence, it becomes vital that there be a constant ‘dialogue’ between administrators and the citizens in an open and honest way, sometimes educating, sometimes learning and most importantly always listening.

What also emerges in this study is that one of the stakeholders, the ones who gain the most in the short term, are the ones who tend to be just bystanders in this engagement process. This raises the question of whether or not they should take a more responsible stand and

²⁸ As noted in the initial development application DA/145/2578/2014 for Aldi

understand the bioregional character of the place, local architectural typologies and community sentiments, thus leading the discussions with local communities. This question calls for further investigation, which is discussed in detail in the next section.

For a ‘conscious’ citizen or a driven planner, the appeal of the theory of ‘bioregionalism’ or the phrase ‘bioregional urbanism’ is that it offers a means (method) to add more levels of detail to assist in achieving sustainable development goals with lesser conflicts and need for activism. It should indeed be viewed as a methodology that brings us one step closer to a more cohesive and harmonious development planning enterprise.

Thus, it can be concluded that meaningful engagement with a conscious local community plays a critical role in bridging the gap between good intentions and the practice of urbanising the rural–urban fringe to ensure local character is retained/enhanced. In turn, this may play a crucial role in promoting the more holistic goal of sustainable urban development.

9.3 Scope for Further Study

This research has set the stage for further investigation and potential application of the principles of bioregional urbanism in the study of urbanisation at the fringe. Further research is also needed on the relationships between local architectural typologies and notions of local character, and community engagement practices in the development planning process. Findings of the main research question: ‘How does architectural identity, as a tangible component of local character, provoke the consciousness of a local community to frame sustainable urban development policies at the rural–urban fringe?’ led to some interesting revelations about the unsatisfactory process of community engagement; showcased the conflicts between approving authorities and local communities; highlighted the burden on local communities to stay aware, to strongly voice their opinions and desires on the direction of development and adaptation of local architectural typologies; and enlightens us on the tactics used by developers to manipulate the ‘check box’ system of development approvals to directly implant ‘universal’ design templates into regions that should ideally receive a lot more care and attention to architectural details.

The following questions persist as an outcome of this research that deserve further study.

- 1 What specific legislative tools exist to translate socio-cultural values of a bioregion into planning and development obligations?
- 2 Can the responsibility of community engagement be shared with the developers/development applicants, under the remit or surveillance of local councils/approval authorities (especially as these applicants are the ones to instigate change and stand to gain the most in such projects)?
- 3 What are the challenges and benefits of direct communications between the developers and local communities?

This thesis has opened up potential research investigations in the disciplines of architecture, planning, anthropology, socio-cultural studies, urban studies and history. Further interdisciplinary scholarship to investigate the above questions would contribute to better development policies, governing practices and shared responsibilities—one step closer to achieving sustainable bioregional urbanism.

9.4 Postscript

There have been a few changes in the way planning and development in South Australia will proceed in future, with the *Development Act 1993* ceasing to be in effect from March 2021 and the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016* (PDI Act) introducing new planning systems and improved building controls. The PDI Act includes a new community engagement charter with a new framework for community engagement, but the desired character statements are not being included. The below sections discuss briefly the assumed implications of these changes in the *Development Act*.

9.4.1 Desired Character Overlay in the New *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016*

It has been noted that the new PDI Act, which commenced on 19 March 2021, does not bring across the desired character statements—which helped shape the basin’s development. However, there is mention of ‘desired built form’ (instead of desired character), where assessments of development applications are based on performance and form-based codes: ‘Performance-based assessment is beneficial in locations where the desired built form outcome is strongly tied to the existing context and form (e.g. character, spaces between buildings, building size and proportions, and building height) or where the desired outcome is transformational’ (State Planning Commission 2019).

The new code also focuses on ‘desired outcomes’ rather than ‘desired character’ and are policies ‘designed to aid interpretation of performance outcomes’. There is also an attempt to place greater emphasis on achieving high quality design by following policies that are relevant to design, for example, ‘Recognise the unique character of areas by identifying their valued physical attributes in consultation with communities’ and ‘Respect the characteristics and identities of different neighbourhoods, suburbs and precincts by ensuring development considers existing and desired future context of a place’.

Omission of desired character is seen as a disadvantage for development in the Willunga Basin, especially for a conscious community who take pride in the ‘character’ of their bioregion and have been striving to retain their ‘semi-rural’ character, as observed in this research. In their response to the phase 3 consultation, Friends of Willunga Basin write:

We support Desired Character Statements being carried over into the Code. Built over decades, Desired Character Statements provide sophisticated local contextual detail which articulate community expectations, while also supporting legislative requirements for Character Preservation, the maintenance of place character (and resistance of homogenisation), particularly with regard to the historic townships contained within the McLaren Vale Character Preservation district: (Port Willunga, Aldinga, Willunga, Kangarilla and Clarendon). This approach will also support the stated intent of the Code to provide a “like for like” policy transition, without compromising the underlying structure or operation of the Code. We believe the current omission of the Desired Character statements, to coin an old phrase, results in the baby being thrown out with the bathwater.

One of the respondents also mentioned that the new code does provide for ‘Heritage Area Statements’ to sit with the ‘Heritage Area Overlay’; however, these statements refer to the existing development, not for looking forward to or guiding the character of new development. While there is intention to apply ‘Character Area Overlay’ to areas in the ‘Established Neighbourhood Zone’, City of Onkaparinga is concerned that this may not be a direct translation of the existing desired character statements. Further, this is not being applied in City of Onkaparinga, so there has been not much review of this in detail.

While the community might welcome the improved community engagement framework, which might help the community to voice and influence the direction of development, the concern remains that without legislated ‘desired character statements’, it continues to be an

uphill battle for the residents of the Willunga Basin. However, it does mean that the community has to stay vigilant, to look through every development proposal closely and provide meaningful feedback. As has been revealed in this research, it is quite a tedious process and consumes a lot of resources, not to mention the need for activism to stay vital for development to be aligned with local character and to be sustainable.

9.4.2 Community Engagement Framework

There have been many changes, for the better, in the community engagement framework currently adopted by the local council encompassing the Willunga Basin, City of Onkaparinga, especially with matters related to framing new policies and projects undertaken by the council directly. There is more effort to reach out to the community rather than to follow the minimum requirement of placing an advertisement in the newspaper and post notification letters to required neighbours as legislated. As per the more recent projects as listed on the website ‘Your Say’ (yoursay.onkaparinga.sa.gov.au/), the community had an opportunity to participate in a survey and discuss and share other ideas related to the proposals. Although this was primarily an online participation, enough promotional activities were undertaken to encourage participation. For example, in the case of engaging with the community on the matter of ‘managing vehicle compliance on protected foreshore areas’, apart from conducting an elected member workshop, a link to the survey was posted on the Onkaparinga Facebook page, the *Advertiser* newspaper published a story about the community engagement program, key stakeholders were invited via email to nudge their members to contribute, and signs were posted at strategic locations inviting participation. This is an important project that is aimed towards restricting vehicular access on the beach via boat ramps during the months of plover breeding, and obtaining community support would go a long way to making this a successful venture. Community engagement processes in recent times seem to be more successful too, one of the projects reporting 1500 visits to the website, 900 downloads of the information documents and 310 participations. However, it is not clear whether any other form of non-digital engagement tactics are being used to connect with the community members who may not be very conversant with digital media and prefer face-to-face interactions. In addition, sometimes there is more value in engaging in person, where the conversations can be stimulated and ideas discussed more vividly.

New age community engagement digital tools, such as ‘socialpinpoint’, ‘bangthetable’, ‘telligent’ ‘engagementhub’ ‘citizen lab’ and ‘thehive’, allow for digital communications to

be more visual, interactive and engaging, especially for those members of the community who might otherwise be busy during the regular office hours and find it easier to interact digitally in their own time from possibly remote locations.

While it is encouraging to note the improvisations in community engagement tactics by the planning and governing agencies, it still remains the responsibility of the community and the agencies, with little or no input from the developers / land owners —the third stakeholder, one who benefits the most. This thesis still reiterates that this important stakeholder in development projects is not actively engaging with the local community and takes actions only when matters have legal implications, long delays or bad publicity. Instead, it is recommended to transfer / extend the responsibility of community engagement onto the developers / land owners much earlier in the conversation to make design and planning process more efficient and truly apply the principles of bioregional urbanism.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Ethics Approval



RESEARCH SERVICES
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AND INTEGRITY
THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE

LEVEL 4, RUNDLE MALL PLAZA
50 RUNDLE MALL
ADELAIDE SA 5000 AUSTRALIA

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FACSIMILE +61 8 8313 3700
EMAIL hrec@adelaide.edu.au

CRICOS Provider Number 00123M

14 August 2017

Associate Professor P Scriver
School of Architecture and Built Environment

Dear Associate Professor Scriver

ETHICS APPROVAL No: H-2017-031

PROJECT TITLE: Urban bioregionalism in policy and practice at Willunga Basin

Thank you for the emails and amended ethics application provided by Pragathi Sridhar on the 25.07.2017 requesting an amendment to the above project. The request to create a closed Facebook group as outlined in the revised application has been reviewed and approved by the Low Risk Human Research Ethics Review Group (Faculty of Arts and Faculty of the Professions).

The ethics expiry date for this project is 31 March 2020.

Ethics approval is granted for three years and is subject to satisfactory annual reporting. The form titled *Annual Report on Project Status* is to be used when reporting annual progress and project completion and can be downloaded at <http://www.adelaide.edu.au/research-services/oreci/human/reporting/>. Prior to expiry, ethics approval may be extended for a further period.

Participants in the study are to be given a copy of the Information Sheet and the signed Consent Form to retain. It is also a condition of approval that you **immediately report** anything which might warrant review of ethical approval including:

- serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants,
- previously unforeseen events which might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project,
- proposed changes to the protocol; and
- the project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.

Yours sincerely

DR JOHN TIBBY
Co-Convenor
Low Risk Human Research Ethics Review Group
(Faculty of Arts and Faculty of the Professions)

DR ANNA OLLJNYK
Co-Convenor
Low Risk Human Research Ethics Review Group
(Faculty of Arts and Faculty of the Professions)

Appendix B: Participant Information

Interview Key	Date Interviewed	Name of Person	Consent to be Identified?
RC 01	5-Apr-17	Iris Iwanicki	Y
RC 02	11-Apr-17	Petra demoy	Y
RC 03	12-Apr-17	Catherine Goodfellow	Y
RC 04	12-Apr-17	Pamela Jenson	Y
RC 05	12-Apr-17	Erik Jensen	Y
RC 06	12-Apr-17	Julie Symonds	Y
RC 07	12-Apr-17	Margaret Dixon	Y
RC 08	12-Apr-17	David Dixon	Y
RC 09	1-May-17	Stepahnie Johnston	Y
RC 10	2-May-17	Graham Ormsby	Y
RC 11	9-May-17	Robin Loechel	Y
RC 12	9-May-17	Judith Turner	Y
RC 13	30-May-17	Hope Deane	Y
RC 14	16-Aug-17	David Cavanagh	Y
RC 15	16-Aug-17	A. Holmes	Y
RC 16	16-Aug-17	Sandra Jonker	Y
RC 17	16-Aug-17	Bronwyn Gilhirst	Y
RC 18	16-Aug-17	Stacey McCaig	Y
RC 19	31-Aug-17	Yvonne McGrotty	Y
RC 20	24-Oct-17	Chris Collin	Y
RC 21	24-Oct-17	David Gill	Y
RC 22	2-Dec-17	Wendy Avery (WGV)	Y
RC 23	2-Dec-17	Lillian Norton	Y
RC 24	12-Dec-17	Miriam Jamain	Y

Appendix C: Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Urban Bioregionalism in Policy and Practice at Willunga Basin

PhD Research: Interview Questions

Semi – Structured Interviews

Questions for Local Resident Families

1. Major Development Projects
 - a. In your experience, in the time you have spent here, what significant developments have you seen?
 - b. Why do you perceive these to be significant developments?
2. Democratic Process
 - a. How did you get to know about the projects?
 - b. Did you attend the consultation meetings?
 - c. Were enough details about the project provided?
 - d. Did you voice your opinion? If so, what was the response? How did you feel?
3. Built Environment
 - b. Did (or will) fit in with the local architectural character?
 - c. What would you like to see in your neighbourhood in terms of development?
 - d. If new buildings and developments are inevitable, what kind of buildings and development would you like to see?
4. Community Impact
 - a. What does community mean to you?
 - b. What is your understanding of neighbourliness and neighbourhood?
 - c. What kind of impact did (or will) have on you, your family and your friends?
 - d. Has you, your family or your friend's way of life changed as a result of the projects?
 - e. What is neighbourliness? What is the scale of a neighbourhood?
5. Ecology
 - a. Explain the characteristics of local ecology
 - b. What is the impact of on local ecology?
 - c. In what way has the character of the natural environment changed?
 - d. What do you think can be done to find an appropriate balance between protecting local ecology and allowing further development?

Appendix D: Interview Sample

Excerpts from semi-structured interview with Chris Colin (RC20), resident of Willunga Garden Village.

Questions on Significant Development Projects in the region:

In your experience, in the time you have spent here, what significant developments have you seen?

Why do you perceive these to be significant developments?

We moved here 12 years ago from southeast, we were looking for somewhere to live, close but not too close to Adelaide. We were living 3.5 hours away previously. We came and had a look, we liked the nice town feel about it, we found a house for sale at Willunga garden village - a very specific development in Willunga - 20 houses with a central common area of 2.5 acres. We liked the house and the feeling of instantly being in a community of 20 dwellings. There was a farewell party for the previous owners and a welcome party for us where we got to know all these 20 people. I am surprised to see that not replicated more often, there are some real benefits. Very significant development - Willunga Garden Village. Town itself has retained a sense of place. Increasing density around transport hubs is a great idea than having 3 houses instead of one in front of my house. Regarding High Street Development - high topic of conversation for a long time. There is a feeling of resigned acceptance - people make gallows humour about it. The tarmac around the hotel went into the petrol station - i think they are trying to make it like a concretan [sic]- take all the tarmac and leave all the gravel. Aldinga Eco Village - its a bit bigger, so they have to be a bit more formal with their structures and processes. From what I know works well.

Questions on Democratic Process

How did you get to know about the projects?

What was your level of participation during (and after) the public consultation period?

Subdivision of the large block opposite our house - potentially all the entrances of those subdivision come on to the road in front of our house. I did write a letter to council querying if the subdivision of one block into 3 was appropriate. I got the impression that the council felt it wasn't appropriate (!) and 3 was a bit over the top and most likely to be two and the lower block would have been to another road. But it is still going to be three. all the discussion was on email and telephone. I wrote a letter originally. How do i feel - it was a shame that that bit of road outside my house is likely to become busy with cars parked there. On the other hand, I recognise benefit in increasing density rather than increasing area of development. It is the bigger picture. High Street Upgrade - There was an attempt to set up a local representative group - to give voice to the people of Willunga about what we wanted done. That happened in a hurried way, Things looked as though they were imposed, there was not a good existing structure to put that together. And that led to difference of opinion within the community about how to move the interests of the community forward. We didn't do too well about it in Willunga. I went to a few meetings but I didn't put my hand up to be on the continuum. having a local organisation that kept itself going on a regular basis and then could be approached to give an opinion. The difference between Onkaparinga council and residents of Willunga was not resolved. council sees this as a project with a start and finish. for us it's our town and our main street, place we walk up and down every day to get mail or milk. Provided employment, done lots of good things. I wonder how much of the feeling did council 'Onkparingarises' the whole thing of which Willunga is a part. Different viewpoints. in Willunga - we live with this, it will always be with us, it will always be out main street. People change will do things surface will change with time, things will need repair. for us it is not a beginning and an end. This is our life into the future. the feeling I have come across is that this is a sort of development to attract tourism which may be good for Willunga or maybe not but is not really being discussed in the open. Hahndorf main street is a place for tourists to go to, not for people of Hahndorf to go to. There is a feeling of concern that our place may be taken over. We don't know what it's going to look like, we have to wait and see. There

is a bit of guerrilla activity going on - people decide that the plant they want in front of their house is this one so they go and plant that. once the project is finished, don't know if the council will set aside funding for maintenance. Attitude of ownership of nature strip . some people adopt those - its council land, house boundary and road. opportunities to negotiate. WGV - requested that we would look after our nature strip - so please don't spray weedkillers. Some people planted right up to the roadside.

Questions on Built Environment

Describe local character in terms of architecture, especially building frontages and streetscapes.

What type of development would you like to see in this region?

I like the old buildings which have been retained in the main street - they may not all be as functional as the new buildings, but they certainly give a sense of place and a feeling about the place. There is a reasonably defined edge of the town, you'll know when you are in Willunga and when you are outside Willunga. We are fortunate that we are surrounded by vineyards and hills, we've got the hills face which protects the hillside - act that protects the agricultural land (Character preservation act). About Willunga Garden Village - set up is - each house block with a share in the company - the company owns the common area - some open space grass - to run around, play cricket or tent up if you want to. Fruit trees and vegetable patch which comes and goes depending on how keen people are to look after it. There is an encumbrance on each block to develop in a certain way, to build in a certain way and to pay your levy on a regular basis. houses are all almost rammed earth, all different and interesting. that requirement produced interesting effects. Common Single room building - used as a occasional meeting place and the swimming pool. each household pays a regular levy to support the maintenance of the common area. There is a circular road that goes around the outside of the garden village and inside the circle are the 20 building blocks and inside that is the common area. Outside of that road is normal Willunga. So, suburban houses and normal development within those areas. Recently an old house on a large block was knocked down and the block has been subdivided into 3, so presumably those will all have houses on them. We'll see how that effects us. It is likely to make a little bit more traffic on those roads, but i think there is no real despair.

Questions on Community Impact

What does community mean to you? What brings the community together?

What kind of impact did (or will) the above project(s) have on you, your family and your friends?

The town has retained the character of a small town, I walk up the street, I meet people who i know. Willunga Garden Village - every few months we have working bees - put nets on the fruit trees. Fruits are shared by all; we always have more fruits than we can eat. there is plenty to go around. The setup allows households to use the common space or not use - some residents who are not involved, don't come to communal meetings, some people spend lot of time and spend every day working the garden - depends on how busy people are. Demographics have changed, people are getting older, there aren't as many children. Although the grand children are coming in now and making use of the (common) space. We have communal shared meals in the communal building called the Barn. Swimming pool is very well used on hot days. Because you recognise people as being part of your community, when you meet them elsewhere, we stop and talk about local things - what happened to the apple tree? There is a feeling of attachment amongst the people who live in the garden village. on the other side of the road is not WGV, but they are still neighbours - generally what I characterise as suburban - people arrive home by car, drive their car in the carport, the door comes down and they are inside. We don't have lot of connection with those immediate neighbours. There would be more connection if they have a dog, they take the dog for a walk, we know lots of people with dogs, we know the names of the dogs. It's a different community - rather than a community of space, its a community of dog ownership. dogs play together, we stop and chat. Neighbourliness is more with WGV. I would recognise everyone in the village, I would spend more time with them, recent events in the village that require conversation. Neighbourliness is much higher with the members of WGV than with the people across the road. We say hello but it's not the same feeling of community. It's that sort of rights and obligations of being part of the community, you have to negotiate a bit of how you live your life, we discuss difficult things, how we live together. whereas people outside that environment don't have to have any dealings with. unless there is something that is

specifically drawn towards them. I love the other village aspect of that - where there is a sense of security in such spaces. Especially if one had to go to a dwelling through a community space, then if you are a stranger, people would challenge. hello, how are you what are you looking for?

Questions on Ecology

Explain the characteristics of local ecology.

What changes have you observed during your time here?

Increasing housing density uses up space that was a paddock or large block with gardens and trees - that is lost. We have had political events in Willunga to retain trees in developments and often not been successful. 'UQ magazine - Meangine' [voice wasn't very clear] - their experience with visiting stone henge - someone interested in indigenous culture and indigenous culture retains memories without writing and she was talking about the stonehenge being a place to walk around to connect with memories to share. rather than a celestial observation. There is a sort of feeling like that as a communal memory - where the thing exists in the community. Trees are one thing; they have been there for 100's of years We are attached to them and to lose them is to lose something more than the form of the tree. And we lose some of our communal memories, it's like old buildings.

Appendix E: Social Media Examples

NO 5 and 4 storey apartment in aldinga beach

Pragathi


NO 5 and 4 storey apartment in aldinga beach

Closed group



- About
- Discussion
- Members
- Events
- Photos
- Moderate Group

Search this group

Shortcuts



Proposed 5 and 4 storey mix on Latitude Estate – 135 I Aldinga



Joined Notifications Share More


Write Post Add Photo/Video Live Video More

Write something...

Photo/Video Get Together Poll

2 people want to join this group

NEW ACTIVITY


 August 14, 2018

Construction of a mixed use development comprising four residential flat buildings consisting of one building to five storeys, which includes a communal rooftop terrace and two buildings to four storeys and one building to three storeys in height (with a range of dwellings, independent living units and serviced apartments), with basement parking, commercial tenancies and associated landscaping.


Has been APPROVED

10 3 Comments Seen by 12


Like Comment

 This decision is currently being appealed 2

Like · Reply · 22w


 Hi do u know if there is any news on the appeal

Like · Reply · 14w


 Like · Reply · 7w

View more replies

Write a reply...

 Oh no, what are they thinking? I hope the appeal is successful!

Like · Reply · 22w

 oh dear!

Aldinga and Surrounds Community Forum
Closed Group



Joined Notifications Share

Shortcuts

See more



August 23 at 3:34pm

A \$46 million development at Aldinga Beach would be the first of its kind in the region, if approved by the State Government
Jessica Brown, Southern Times Messenger
July 12, 2017 1:43pm

A MULT-MILLION apartment complex, which would include a six-storey building and 70 retirement units, has been earmarked for Aldinga Beach. Developer Winwest has applied to the State Government's Development Assessment Commission to build four buildings at 135 Aldinga Beach Rd. Three of the buildings in the \$46.8 million development, called Latitude, would be four storeys high and the other six storeys high.

They would each have shops and consulting rooms on the ground floor, retirement units and apartments above and basement carparking, and be across from the Aldinga Beach Shopping Centre.

Winwest spokesman Nathan Paine said the development was a "crucial and significant" opportunity for the region.

"This is meeting the needs of the community by allowing those that need retirement living to continue to do so in their community, near their families," Mr Paine said.

Mr Paine said it would help ensure Aldinga had a "bright and sustainable future".

"It is expected that the project will generate about 120 direct construction jobs and about 48 ongoing jobs in the retirement, serviced apartments, retail and consulting rooms," he said.

Aldinga Bay Residents Association Kevin Hutton expected it would be of concern to residents.

"If they don't even like telephone towers, I don't think they're going to like multi-storey buildings," Mr Hutton said.

Onkaparinga Council's city services director Alison Hancock said the area earmarked for the development was zoned to allow for buildings up to three storeys high.

She said if approved, it would be the first development of its kind in the region, dwarfing the area's tallest building, believed to be about 10 metres high. The Development Assessment Commission is considering the plan, before releasing it for public consultation.

Meanwhile, the council has removed nine areas from its medium density policy, including Flagstaff Hill, Happy Valley and Woodcroft, following public feedback.

Minimum block sizes, more off-street parking and increased front and rear building setbacks have also been introduced in these areas, as part of the council's proposed changes.

The medium density policy, which is aimed at encouraging more residents to live in certain areas by offering smaller properties, is now centred around the council's seven "major activity centres", including the Aberfoyle Park and Seaford district centres.

The proposed changes came into interim effect on May 30, but residents can have their say until July 25.

Visit onkaparingacity.com for more information.

Like Comment

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Facebook © 2017

Chat (26)



Discussion

Members

Events

Videos

Photos

Files

Recommendations

6 story

Filter Results

Sort by

Top Posts

Most Recent

Posted by

Anyone

You

Your Friends

Choose a Source...

Tagged Location

Anywhere

Adelaide, South Australia

Bangalore, India

Choose a Location...

Date Posted

Any date

2017

2016

2015

Choose a Date...

Joined | Notifications | Share

Aldinga and Surrounds Community Forum
 August 24 at 2:17pm ·
 Meeting 26th Aug 11am Latitude estate proposed site opp maacas to discuss 6 story apartment open to all
 You and 9 others · 13 Comments

Aldinga and Surrounds Community Forum
 August 25 at 3:02pm ·
 3 Comments

shared a link.
 July 13
 4 and 6 story apartment and residential living rite here in the heart of our little country town. What do you all think??

Messenger Community News
 MESSENGER.NEWSPAPERDIRECT.COM

17 · 41 Comments

Like · Comment · Share

nooooo! because eventually it will look like Glenelg only views for the privileged few! 🙄
 Like · Reply · 7 · July 13 at 9:22am

Hope it won't block the views of our beautiful hills!
 Like · Reply · 4 · July 13 at 9:22am

I think it will block our beautiful views and change the entire look of our community... Not for the better... Definitely don't want it to look like Glenelg...
 Like · Reply · 6 · July 13 at 9:27am

I think its a good idea but not sure about putting in shops in the ground floor. Theres enough empty shops in the shopping centre as it is.
 Like · Reply · 4 · July 13 at 9:29am

Seriously? Just why? Already enough empty shops and plenty of land around for normal housing. This won't be cheap housing either. Apartment living in Aldinga Beach? I say no.
 Like · Reply · 8 · July 13 at 9:31am · Edited

Will be so expensive!
 Like · Reply · July 13 at 9:37am

Write a reply...

No way
 Like · Reply · 4 · July 13 at 9:30am

No wouldn't like it at all!!
 Like · Reply · 3 · July 13 at 9:31am

I think they are having trouble selling the teeny tiny blocks in Latitude and this is a way of recouping some cash. Allowing this to go through would set a precedent and before you know investors will be snapping up properties along the esplanade and wanting to do the same.
 Like · Reply · 5 · July 13 at 9:46am · Edited

Oh no.it wont be country anymore
 Like · Reply · 2 · July 13 at 9:54am

ADD MEMBERS

Enter name or email address...

DESCRIPTION

Please answer both questions when requesting to join.

ASCF is... See More

GROUP TYPE

Neighbors

TAGS

Aldinga, South Australia · Sellicks Beach · Willunga, South Australia

CREATE NEW GROUPS

Groups make it easier than ever to share with friends, family and teammates.

Create Group

RECENT GROUP PHOTOS

See All



Suggested Groups

See All




Hallett Cove Bay, Swap, Sell & Community Buzz


2 friends · 216 members

Join


Chat (38)

 buildings in our area, Willunga, McLaren Vale are over 2 stories - whilst development is welcome, 4-6 stories will destroy our beautiful town, just as the awful attempt to build sea-walls at Silver Sands would have 20+ years ago for a marina...


[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 11 · August 23 at 3:42pm

 nooooo! because eventually it will look like Glenelg only views for the privileged few! 😞


[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 7 · July 13 at 9:22am

s Hope it won't block the views of our beautiful hills!


[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 4 · July 13 at 9:22am

 think it will block our beautiful views and change the entire look of our community... Not for the better... Definitely don't want it to look like Glenelg...

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 6 · July 13 at 9:27am

 I think its a good idea but not sure about putting in shops in the ground floor. Theres enough empty shops in the shopping centre as it is.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 4 · July 13 at 9:29am

 Seriously? Just why? Already enough empty shops and plenty of land around for normal housing. This won't be cheap housing either. Apartment living in Aldinga Beach? I say no.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 8 · July 13 at 9:31am · Edited



October 13, 2020 · 🌐



Story in the Messenger this evening on the Latitude development. It is behind a paywall so if you aren't a subscriber you won't be able to read it. My quotes: "The residents are still opposed to any development that is that high and that out of character with Aldinga and the wider Aldinga Bay area," Aldinga Bay Residents Association president Joshua Reiter said. "We're really disappointed that after quite a long process we're still looking at quite high development that would stand out so much."



ADELAIDENOW.COM.AU

Controversial multi-million project set for Aldinga Beach

A contentious multimillion-dollar development in Aldinga Beach will finally begin constructi...

👍👎 3

21 Comments



Like



Comment



Send

View 2 previous comments



Great news 😊

Like Reply 1y



Unfortunately it is always going to happen. Myponga Beach is looking pretty good.

Like Reply 1y Edited



Is there any way to get this information without a subscription? On the council website perhaps?
It seems that without access to this information, we are ignorant about matters that impact on the place we call home and silenced from speaking up. 😞

Like Reply 1y



I am organising a public meeting through the residents association. You might be able to find some answers on the council website or keep your eye out for the next instalment of Coastal Views, your local FREE community newsletter!

Like Reply 1y

↪ 7 Replies



Willunga Aldinga McLarenVale - Bioregional Urban Development

Private group · 11 members



Joined

Invite

Posting in this group is temporarily paused

An admin paused new posts in this group. Only admins can post. Everyone in the group can comment and react to existing content.

Resume Posts

About Discussion Featured Rooms Topics Members Events Media Files



Write something...



Live video



Photo/video



Room

Featured

Add

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This group has been created for the purpose of a PhD research at University of Adelaide. This research studies the impact of urban development o... [See more](#)

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Pragathi created a poll. Admin · July 25, 2017

This needs your consent. Please read and mark as appropriate - "I have read the attached information sheet. I understand the purpose of the research. I consent to participate. I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time." If you do not wish to be identified in the report, you will be assigned a code.

I agree for my views posted here to be used as data for the research 66%

I agree to be identified 33%

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6 Votes 3 Comments Seen by 1



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Pragathi Author Admin
Hi all, it would be great if you could mention here whether or not you agree to the above. I shall be posting a question or a topic to discuss. Am looking forward to your views.

Like Reply 5y

Pragathi Author Admin
Hi all, I have posted all my key questions in the five categories. Do feel free to respond to them, all or any, at your own time. If you prefer to discuss it face to face, I am happy to meet you in person. The discussion generally takes about an hour.

Like Reply 5y

About

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Rooms are a way for you to video chat with your group. Whenever the group admins create a room, it'll appear here.

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Appendix F: List of Development Plans and Amendments for Willunga Basin

The following table lists the amendments and consolidation of the Development Plans since they were first released under the *Development Act 1993*. The amendments that have been studied in detail for the purpose of this research have been highlighted in green.

Date consolidated	Amendment - [Gazetted date]
20-Dec-18	Aldinga Urban Lands DPA - [13 December 2018]
	Section 29(2)(b)(i) - [22 November 2018]
	Section 29(2)(b)(i) and (3)(c)(ii) Amendments - [27 February 2018]
20-Feb-18	Employment Lands DPA - [6 February 2018]
	Southern Innovation Area DPA (<i>Ministerial</i>) - [20 February 2018]
	Section 29(2)(b)(ii) Amendment - [20 February 2018]
19-Dec-17	Section 29(2)(b)(ii) Amendment - [4 July 2017]
	General Residential and Miscellaneous DPA - [19 December 2017]
30-May-17	General Residential and Miscellaneous DPA (Interim) - [30 May 2017]
21-Apr-16	Section 29(2)(b)(ii) Amendment - [14 January 2016]
	Aldinga District Centre DPA - [7 April 2016]
	Existing Activity Centres Policy Review DPA (<i>Ministerial</i>) - [21 April 2016]
16-Apr-15	Hackham South East DPA - [9 April 2015]
14-Aug-14	Seaford District Centre DPA - [31 July 2014]
	Section 29(2)(b)(i) and (2)(b)(ii) Amendment - [14 August 2014]
19-Dec-13	Bulky Goods DPA - [19 December 2013]
19-Sep-13	Section 29(2)(b)(ii) Amendment - [1 August 2013]
	Supplementary Local Heritage DPA - [19 September 2013]
4-Jul-13	Better Development Plan (BDP) Zones and General Amendments DPA - [4 July 2013]
24-Jan-13	Barossa Valley and McLaren Vale - Revised - Protection Districts DPA (<i>Ministerial</i>) - [18 January 2013]
13-Dec-12	Termination of the Statewide Wind Farms DPA (<i>Ministerial</i>) and its removal from the Onkaparinga (City) Development Plan - [18 October 2012]
	Statewide Wind Farms DPA (<i>Ministerial</i>) – [18 October 2012]

Date consolidated	Amendment - [Gazetted date]
	Regulated Trees DPA (<i>Ministerial</i>) - [15 November 2012]
	Section 29(2)(c) Amendment - [29 November 2012]
	Editorial correction to maps
20-Sep-12	Noarlunga Regional Centre (Transit Oriented Development) DPA - [20 September 2012]
	Editorial correction to MOSS (Environment) Zone non-complying list
19-Apr-12	Termination of the Barossa Valley and McLaren Vale Protection Districts DPA (<i>Ministerial</i>) and its removal from the Onkaparinga (City) Development Plan - [5 April 2012]
	Barossa Valley and McLaren Vale - Revised - Protection Districts DPA (Interim) (<i>Ministerial</i>) - [11 April 2012]
24-Nov-11	Barossa Valley and McLaren Vale Protection Districts DPA (Interim) (<i>Ministerial</i>) - [28 September 2011]
	Statewide Wind Farms DPA (Interim) (<i>Ministerial</i>) - [19 October 2011]
	Regulated Trees DPA (Interim) (<i>Ministerial</i>) - [17 November 2011]
23 June 2011	Section 29(2)(b)(ii) Amendment - [23 June 2011]
2-Jun-11	Seaford Heights DPA (<i>Ministerial</i>) - [26 May 2011]
	Statewide Bulky Goods DPA (<i>Ministerial</i>) - [13 January 2011]
	Bushfires (Miscellaneous Amendments) DPA (<i>Ministerial</i>) - [9 December 2010]
4-Nov-10	Residential Infill and Desired Character DPA - [4 November 2010]
8-Jul-10	Statewide Bulky Goods DPA (<i>Ministerial</i>) (Interim) - [1 June 2010]
10-Dec-09	General Amendments (Part 2) DPA - [10 December 2009]
	Bushfires (Miscellaneous Amendments) DPA (<i>Ministerial</i>) - [10 December 2009]
27-Aug-09	Local Heritage (Onkaparinga) DPA - [27 August 2009]
26-Feb-09	Residential Parks and Caravan and Tourist Parks DPA (<i>Ministerial</i>) - [11 December 2008]
	Cessation of Interim Operation of the 'Commercial Forestry DPA' on 21 February 2009 and its removal from the Onkaparinga (City) Development Plan - [5 March 2009]
28-Aug-08	Local Heritage (Onkaparinga) DPA (Interim) - [28 August 2008]
31-Jul-08	Aldinga-Sellicks Desired Character PAR - [31 July 2008]
10-Apr-08	Commercial Forestry DPA (Interim) (<i>Ministerial</i>) - [21 February 2008]

Date consolidated	Amendment - [Gazetted date]
	Residential (Foothills) DPA - [10 April 2008]
	General Amendments Part 1 DPA - [10 April 2008]
24-Jan-08	Seaford Meadows PAR - [3 January 2008]
20-Dec-07	Bushfire Management (Part 3) PAR (<i>Ministerial</i>) - [29 November 2007]
	Section 29(2)(b)(ii) Amendment - [6 December 2007]
	Residential Parks and Caravan and Tourist Parks DPA (<i>Ministerial</i>) (Interim) - [13 December 2007]
29 November 2007	Section 29(2)(b)(ii) Amendment - [20 September 2007]
	Noarlunga Downs/Huntfield Heights PAR - [1 November 2007]
29-Mar-07	Section 27(5) Amendment - Mount Lofty Ranges Watershed Wineries and Ancillary Development PAR (<i>Ministerial</i>) - [25 January 2007]
	Southern Region Waste Resource Depot PAR - [22 March 2007]
24-Aug-06	Southern Metropolitan Growth Management PAR (<i>Ministerial</i>)
22-Jun-06	Mount Lofty Ranges Watershed Wineries and Ancillary Development PAR (<i>Ministerial</i>) - [8 June 2006]
2-Mar-06	Coromandel Valley Desired Character (Stage 2) PAR - [23 February 2006]
	Noarlunga Regional Centre PAR - [2 March 2006]
24-Nov-05	Onkaparinga Catchment PAR - [10 November 2005]
	Section 29(2) (b) (ii) Amendment - [24 November 2005]
22-Sep-05	Section 27(5) Amendment - Local Heritage (Noarlunga) PAR - [15 September 2005]
	Section 29(2) (b) (ii) Amendment - [Table Onka/9 - [15 September 2005]
17-Mar-05	Southern Metropolitan Growth Management PAR (<i>Ministerial</i>) - [17 March 2005]
3-Mar-05	Coromandel Valley Desired Character PAR (Interim) - [3 March 2005]
	Hills Face Zone (Interim Policy) PAR (<i>Ministerial</i>) - [24 February 2005]
9-Dec-04	Local Heritage (Noarlunga) PAR - [2 December 2004]
	Local Heritage (Willunga) PAR - [2 December 2004]
26-Mar-04	Hills Face Zone PAR (Interim) (<i>Ministerial</i>) - [27 February 2004]
	Southern Metropolitan Growth Management PAR (Interim) (<i>Ministerial</i>) - [26 March 2004]
	Editorial Correction (removal of duplicated maps)

Date consolidated	Amendment - [Gazetted date]
4-Dec-03	Local Heritage (Noarlunga) PAR (Interim) - [4 December 2003]
	Local Heritage (Willunga) PAR (Interim) - [4 December 2003]
6-Nov-03	Wind Farms PAR (<i>Ministerial</i>) - [24 July 2003]
	Seaford Industrial Land PAR - [6 November 2003]
3-Jul-03	Section 29(2) (b) (ii) Amendment - [3 July 2003]
27-Mar-03	Metropolitan Urban Boundary PAR (<i>Ministerial</i>) - [20 March 2003]
20-Feb-03	Southern Expressway Surplus Land PAR - [20 February 2003]
28-Nov-02	Happy Valley (City), Noarlunga (City) and Willunga (DC) (Metro) Development Plans - Consolidation and Miscellaneous PAR - [28 November 2002]
	Stormwater in Urban Areas PAR (<i>Ministerial</i>) - [12 November 2002]
	Section 29(2) (a) Amendment - [Bushfire Prone Area Mapping - [28 November 2002]

Appendix G: Advertisement and Letter Box Drop for recruiting interview correspondents



Are you a Local Resident?

I am a PhD candidate from the University of Adelaide conducting research on the impact of urban development on the agriculture and ecology at the fringe of large cities. This research focuses on Willunga Basin, as a case study. I am particularly interested in community participation in relation to the governance that regulates this urban development. The aim is to understand the implications for the cultural landscape of the Basin.

I would like to learn about your engagement in relation to this process of governance. I seek participants who have lived in Willunga Basin for 10 years or more. I would like to interview you for approximately one hour at a place, date and time that is mutually convenient.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact Ms Pragathi Sridhar on 0401 558 332 or email pragathi.sridhar@adelaide.edu.au

This research has been approved by the University of Adelaide's Human Research Ethics Committee (approval number H-2017-031)

Urban Bioregionalism in Policy and Practice at Willunga Basin Pragathi Sridhar – 0401 558 332 Pragathi.sridhar@adelaide.edu.au	Urban Bioregionalism in Policy and Practice at Willunga Basin Pragathi Sridhar – 0401 558 332 Pragathi.sridhar@adelaide.edu.au	Urban Bioregionalism in Policy and Practice at Willunga Basin Pragathi Sridhar – 0401 558 332 Pragathi.sridhar@adelaide.edu.au	Urban Bioregionalism in Policy and Practice at Willunga Basin Pragathi Sridhar – 0401 558 332 Pragathi.sridhar@adelaide.edu.au	Urban Bioregionalism in Policy and Practice at Willunga Basin Pragathi Sridhar – 0401 558 332 Pragathi.sridhar@adelaide.edu.au	Urban Bioregionalism in Policy and Practice at Willunga Basin Pragathi Sridhar – 0401 558 332 Pragathi.sridhar@adelaide.edu.au	Urban Bioregionalism in Policy and Practice at Willunga Basin Pragathi Sridhar – 0401 558 332 Pragathi.sridhar@adelaide.edu.au	Urban Bioregionalism in Policy and Practice at Willunga Basin Pragathi Sridhar – 0401 558 332 Pragathi.sridhar@adelaide.edu.au
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**THE UNIVERSITY
of ADELAIDE**

Urban Bioregionalism in Policy and Practice at Willunga Basin

If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact Ms Pragathi Sridhar on Phone: 0401 558 332 Or email: pragathisridhar@adelaide.edu.au

Development in your Region?

I am a PhD candidate from the University of Adelaide conducting research on the impact of urban development on the agriculture and ecology at the fringe of large cities. This research focuses on Willunga Basin, as a case study. I am particularly interested in community participation in relation to the governance that regulates this urban development. The aim is to understand implications of urban development on cultural landscape of the Basin.

I would like to learn about your engagement in relation to this process of development/ governance. I seek participants who have lived in Willunga Basin for 10 years or more. I would like to interview you for approximately one hour at a place, date and time that is mutually convenient.

This research has been approved by the University of Adelaide, Human Research Ethics Committee (approval number-H-2017-031)