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Historic buildings stay - out of sight

HERITAGE MATTERS

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THE reality of heritage in Adelaide is it has to co-exist with the overwhelming influx of the new.

It is too simple to think that a heritage building simply is a piece of hardware that needs to be preserved, regardless of what is going on around it.

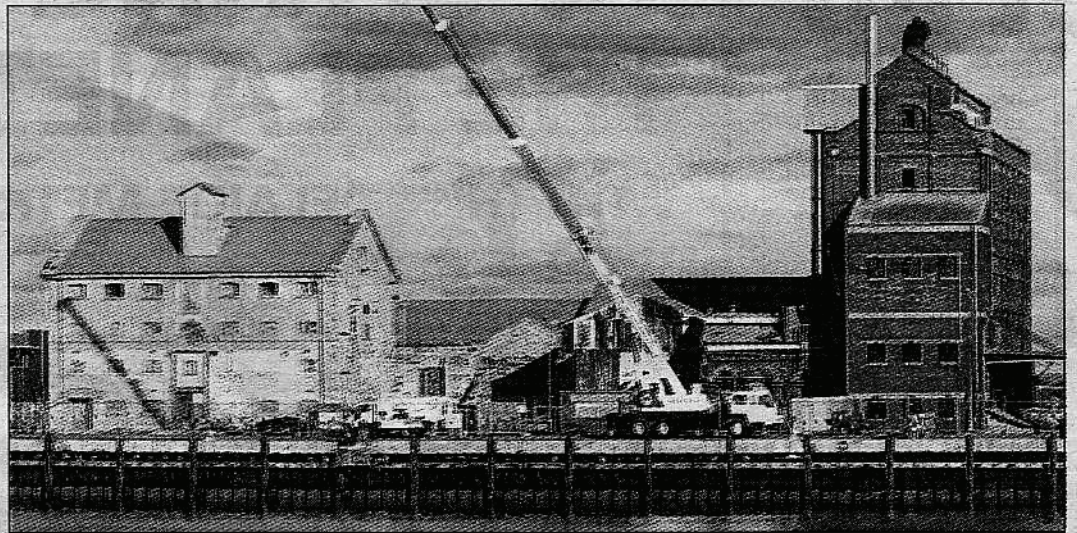
It is simplistic, too, to think historic precincts can be wrapped in cellophane and left unscathed by development.

All the more important, then, that when we do allow in the developers, they get the meeting of old and new right.

The Newport Quays development, with 52ha of residential development around the old Port, was going to make a mess in any case.

The development does protect two historic buildings, Hart's Mill and the Adelaide Milling Company.

The first is a large squat stone building on the wharf, the second a tall brick building strategically placed to overlook the inner wharves of the



CLOSED OFF: Hart's Mill and the Adelaide Milling Company at Port Adelaide.

Port. The problem here is that the developers are going to preserve and adapt the buildings but they are not going to adequately protect their settings. The buildings are valued not just because of their age and significance but also because of their context, as important dominating presences along the wharves.

By the time Newport Quays is finished with them, they will no longer be on the wharves.

Instead, they will be behind new waterfront apartments and homes.

There is a concession to the buildings but it is really just an added insult. It is termed a "view corridor" where visitors, if they are sharp, can see how the buildings once related to the wharves.

It is hard to blame the developers, Multiplex, for this. Multiplex is quite capable of heritage-sensitive develop-

ment when it is given the right rules to follow.

Here, however, the developer was allowed to partner the State Government in the scoping study of the development, which should have been conducted independently. This is a failure by local state member and Treasurer, Kevin Foley and a succession of Environment and Conservation ministers, currently Gail Gago.