

**SAHC Agenda Item:** 7.1

**File No.:**26592

**SOUTH LAKES (RESIDENTIAL ESTATE AND GOLF COURSE)**

**Area bounded by Beach Road, Yates Avenue, Barrage Road and lake foreshore, and sand dunes to 90 Mile Beach, Goolwa South**

**ACTION:**

For Decision

**BACKGROUND:**

1. On 10 May 2024, the South Australian Heritage Council (the Council) received a nomination from a member of the public for South Lakes (residential estate and golf course), Goolwa South (Hundred of Goolwa) as the nominator believes it meets criteria (a) and (g) under s16 of the *Heritage Places Act 1993* (the Act) for listing as a State Heritage Place in the South Australian Heritage Register (the Register) (**Attachment A**). The place encompasses hundreds of land parcels, the extent of the nominated place is identified in Appendix A.
2. The nomination indicates that the place is under threat due to a change in land use for a portion of the golf course that would allow residential development of it (extent of land proposed for subdivision identified in Appendix A).
3. After considering the nomination and a triage assessment, Sandy Verschoor, Chair of the Council, determined not to provisionally enter South Lakes in the Register under s17(2)(b) to protect it while it is assessed, instead requesting that an expedited short form assessment is completed for the Council's consideration (this agenda paper).
4. The assessment finds that South Lakes does not meet any of the s16 criteria and it is recommended that the Council rejects the nomination.

**DISCUSSION:**

5. The history of Max Lieberman's role in the development of metropolitan Adelaide and some regional areas, notably through the companies he owned is the focus of a peer reviewed article in the *Journal of the Historical Society of South Australia* (**Attachment B**). It was authored by Assoc. Prof. Dr Christine Garnaut (academic and planning historian) and Dr Alan Hutchings (now deceased but previously a Director of the Monarto Development Commission, town planner for the SA government and Land Commissioner in what is now the Environment Resources and Development Court) and is provided for the Council's consideration instead of the usual history presented in an Assessment Report.
6. Other supplementary research materials used in the assessment are referenced in Appendix B.

**Meeting Date:** 5 September 2024

**Prepared by:** Heritage South Australia

7. A site visit was undertaken by Dr Louise Bird and Dr Tom Mackay on 26 July 2024 and included driving around the streets of the South Lakes development. The following assessment has been prepared by Dr Louise Bird.

### **Background Context**

8. Max Lieberman was owner or part owner and guiding agent in several private development companies in South Australia in the second half of the twentieth century. South Lakes is one of several developments undertaken by Lieberman through his business interests.
9. Lieberman was influenced by the planning initiatives of the SA Housing Trust and later SA Land Commission and their extensive use of the neighbourhood unit to structure the physical and social development of metropolitan Adelaide and regional centres in the second half of the twentieth century. The purpose of the neighbourhood unit is to create community-oriented developments to improve the quality of living and working environments. Its use was in response to poorer outcomes experienced in the speculative and unplanned residential subdivisions that had and were occurring prior to and after the Second World War. The neighbourhood unit was first used by the SA Housing Trust at Elizabeth.
10. Lieberman was particularly interested in ensuring that his developments included built elements and organisations that would assist with building and supporting the community anticipated to emerge in his developments. He also worked with a number of a local architects to design a suite of houses that people could purchase as a land and house package.
11. Developments undertaken by Lieberman's companies include Lieberman Estate, North Brighton, 1950s (50 dwellings), Para Hills early 1960s (1250 dwellings with services and community facilities provided), Clover Crest mid-late 1960s, now part of Modbury Heights and Modbury North (2100 dwellings with services and community facilities provided), and South Lakes (subject of this assessment) late 1960s (600 dwellings with some community facilities oriented towards emerging ideas of resort lifestyles and arranged around a golf course).
12. Lieberman was also on the board of Delfin which developed West Lakes and Golden Grove, respectively in the 1970s-1980s and 1980s-2003. The neighbourhood unit was the basis of planning at both sites.

### **South Lakes**

13. South Lakes is located at Goolwa South and was marketed as 'a holiday life of adventure' and the 'Riviera of the South' by its developer Realty Development Corporation (RDC). Comprising 600 allotments, the development was arranged around a golf course and featured the ocean to the south and fresh water lake above the Goolwa barrage to the east as the basis of recreational activities.
14. Unlike its other developments, RDC did not include the usual mix of community facilities, instead following the resort lifestyle idea. Within 18 months of the first allotments being offered for sale the following had been provided: bituminised roads, services, tree plantings and lawns, golf course featuring a small artificial lake and practice green with clubhouse, pleasure boat pier, *Aroona* pleasure boat made available for hire, motel

featuring 20 units (under construction) and associated restaurant, landscaped reserves on the foreshore (lake), and aquatic clubhouse. Many other anticipated features never eventuated as they were intended to be supplied by private operators once sufficient numbers of residents had moved in to make them financially viable.

15. RDC designed a suite of homes it considered suitable for construction at South Lakes. Other designs were allowed but had to be approved by RDC before construction commenced. Only 70 homes were constructed in the first 18 months and a number of those were erected by RDC as holiday home rentals. The first houses were clustered around Billabong, McKinnon and Cant Roads, Galpin Avenue and the Esplanade that fronted the lake (now Barrage Road).
16. The motel and shop (built later) were demolished in 2002. During the site visit it was also confirmed that most of the originally built homes and notably those designed for RDC have been demolished and replaced with larger modern houses.
17. Assessment under the s16 Criteria
  - a. South Lakes is a residential development planned and implemented at Goolwa South from the late 1960s. Unlike the neighbourhood unit, which emerged as the dominant planning concept for South Australia in the second half of the twentieth century and was community-oriented in its premise, South Lakes was an anomaly in that it aimed to create a resort lifestyle. Housing allotments were sited around an 18-hole golf course with the adjacent ocean and lake offering access to a variety of aquatic activities. Bespoke housing that referenced resort and beach culture was also designed for the development, although only a small portion of the 600 allotments ultimately featured these homes. While South Lakes is an interesting planning concept it does not demonstrate an important aspect in the evolution or pattern of the State's history. Instead, it is the neighbourhood unit which was used by government and private planners to organise the growth of metropolitan Adelaide and regional centres that does. It is at places such as Elizabeth, parts of Noarlunga, West Lakes, Golden Grove, Craigmore, Aberfoyle Park, etc that the neighbourhood unit was used and better demonstrates this aspect of the State's history. It is for these reasons that South Lakes is not considered to meet criterion (a).
  - b. While South Lakes could be described as being a rare type of development in South Australia, with only West Lakes potentially drawing on a similar idea of a holiday lifestyle, achieving such ambitions within the built form is not of cultural significance to South Australia. Rather it is the community-oriented planning that emerged after the Second World War known as the neighbourhood unit that is and, which was, after its introduction to the State by the SA Housing Trust at Elizabeth, used extensively by both government and private planners in their developments across the State. While South Lakes is an interesting anomalous planning concept it was also never fully realised with several key proposed elements of the plan remaining unbuilt, in particular resort-based ventures. Even if South Lakes were to be considered of cultural significance to South Australia its intactness has been diminished meaning it no longer retains sufficient integrity to portray the qualities that would be considered significant. Notably, the motel has been demolished as has most of the bespoke

designed housing which was a key feature of the development. South Lakes is not considered to meet criterion (b).

- c. There is nothing to suggest that South Lakes is likely to yield information about South Australia that is not already well documented through existing sources, including images, maps, plans, documents, media articles, oral histories, etc. South Lakes is not considered to meet criterion (c).
- d. South Lakes was devised as a residential development that would offer its residents a resort lifestyle and was based on a modified form of the community-planning concepts of the neighbourhood unit. Critical elements of the neighbourhood unit such as a neighbourhood centre composed of local shopping centre, open space, primary school and/or kindergarten, and other community facilities were not included in the plan for South Lakes. Consequently, South Lakes is not considered to be an outstanding representative of a neighbourhood unit. As argued in criterion (b) even if resort-styled residential developments were considered to be of cultural significance to South Australia, the intactness and integrity of South Lakes has been extensively compromised to such an extent that it cannot be considered to be an exceptional or pivotal example. It is also not considered to be an influential example as it did not influence residential development across South Australia and remains an interesting anomaly. Criterion (d) is not considered to be met.
- e. South Lakes is a planned residential development that is comprised of housing allotments arranged around an 18-hole golf course to fit a portion of land adjacent to the ocean and the lake at Goolwa. It has been subdivided in such a manner as to maximise the number of homes that could be built and does not demonstrate a high degree of creative, aesthetic or technical accomplishment nor is it an outstanding representative of construction techniques or design characteristics. Rather South Lakes replicates conventional subdivisional design albeit with a golf course in the middle. The design of the golf course is also compromised in that it is cut by a main road that provides access from Goolwa to the lake, meaning that golfers have to cross the road to complete 3 of the 18 fairways. While some of the bespoke designed homes could be considered individually under this criterion, no single house has yet been identified as remaining and retaining a high level of intactness, although this would not preclude future identification and individual nomination. Criterion (e) is not considered to be met.
- f. The South Lakes community, the people who have lived there and those people who do still live there, are likely to have a strong attachment to South Lakes. However, this is a common or typical type of attachment that most people who live in a community hold for the area in which they live. As the associations are commonplace any attachment the South Lakes community has for it cannot be said to represent an event or story that contributes to South Australia's identity that is beyond the ordinary. South Lakes is not considered to meet criterion (f).
- g. South Lakes has an association with Reality Development Corporation (RDC) and Max Lieberman. Lieberman was a Jewish Egyptian immigrant who was deeply involved in the development of metropolitan Adelaide throughout the second half of

the twentieth century. Lieberman both prior to and through his company RDC and its successors was able to support and promote the ideals of community-oriented development in South Australia. South Lakes is one of several developments that Lieberman and RDC were responsible for and/or involved with. Unlike those other developments South Lakes was not premised entirely on the idea of community-oriented design, rather drawing on a resort lifestyle ethos that was partially implemented at South Lakes. While South Lakes was an interesting residential planning experiment for RDC and Lieberman, it does not have a special association with either. Instead, it is places such as Clover Crest, Para Hills, West Lakes and Golden Grove that better demonstrate the work of RDC (at the two former) and Lieberman (at all four sites) that is considered to be of historical importance to South Australia.

18. As South Lakes is not considered to meet any of the s16 criteria of the Act it is recommended that the Council reject the nomination.

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**Legal Basis**

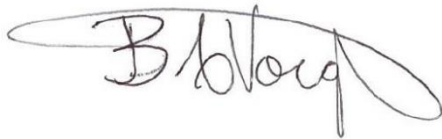
This action is proposed in accordance with Section 17 of the *Heritage Places Act 1993*:

- (1) The Council may, on its own initiative or on application by any person, consider whether a particular place within the State should be entered in the Register.
- (2) If the Council is of the opinion –
  - (a) that a place is of heritage significance  
it may provisionally enter the place in the Register.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That the South Australian Heritage Council:

1. **Rejects South Lakes, a residential area and golf course bounded by Beach Road, Yates Avenue, Barrage Road and foreshore to Lake, Sand Dunes to 90-mile Beach, Goolwa South, Hundred of Goolwa** as it does not meet any of the s16 criteria in the *Heritage Places Act 1993*.



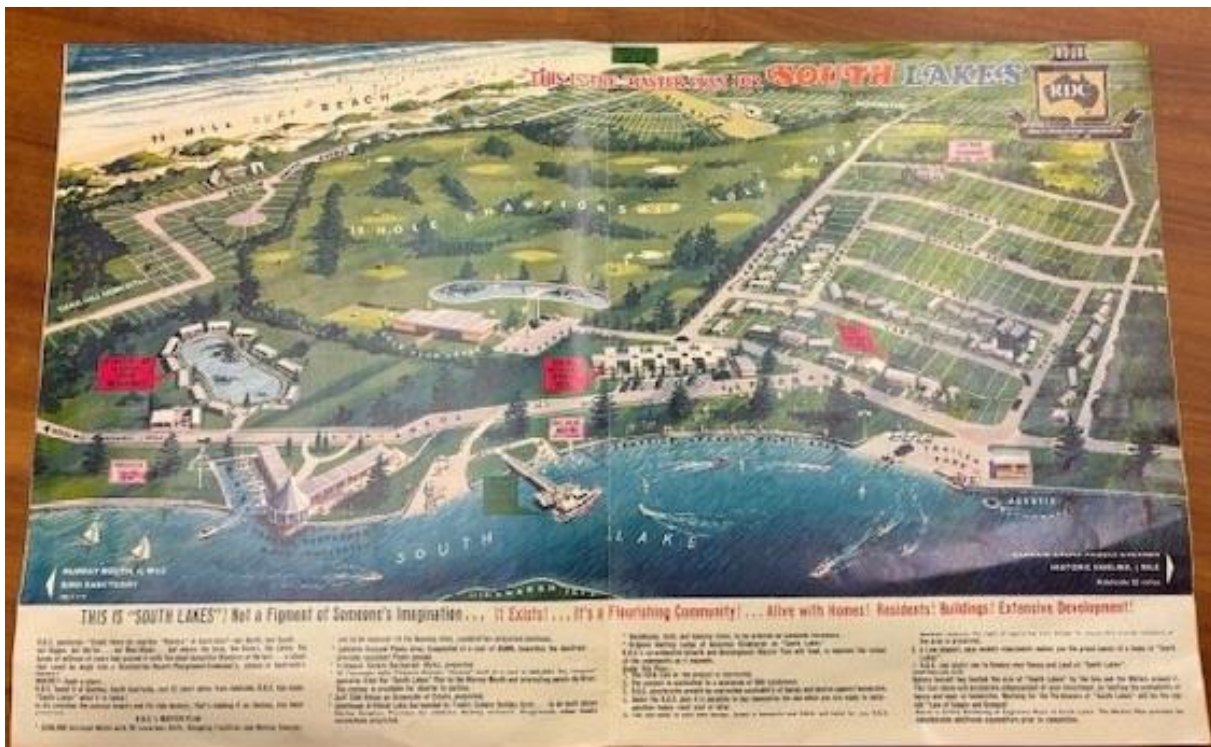
**Beverley Voigt**  
**Manager Heritage South Australia**

**Date: 23 August 2024**

**List of Attachments****Attachment A: Nomination South Lakes**

**Attachment B:** Alan Hutchings and Christine Garnaut, (2012), 'The Private Development Company and the Building of Planned Communities in Post-War South Australia: Reid Murray Developments, Realty Development Corporation and their successors', *Journal of the Historical Society of South Australia*, vol. 40, pp.96-116.

## Appendix A



**Master Plan of South Lakes as delineated in the promotional literature c.1968, showing the subdivision layout and realised and proposed facilities. The airstrip (now built over) and Governor Hindmarsh's hunting lodge (top right corner) were existing site features.**

Source: RDC 'South Lakes' pamphlet available at State Library of South Australia

Note: there is no evidence to suggest that Governor Hindmarsh built and/or used the hunting lodge. The appearance of the extant building suggests that it could have been built as early as the 1850s (after Hindmarsh's return to England), however, no research has been done to verify its age.



**Extent of South Lakes with lake front completing the extent of the development. The portion of the golf course outlined in dark orange is the land identified for change in use to enable it to be subdivided for additional housing. The air strip entered the development (bottom left corner).**



## Appendix B

Bird, Louise (2018), *Neighbourhood Shops: Park and Shop Centres in Metropolitan Adelaide 1955-1985*, Architecture Museum Monograph series #10, School of Art , Architecture and Design, Adelaide.

Bird, Louise (2016), *Planning for Open Space in Postwar South Australia: open space benefits and local open space systems at Elizabeth, Noarlunga and Golden Grove*, PhD thesis, UniSA.

Hutchings, Alan and Garnaut, Christine (2012), 'The Private Development Company and the Building of Planned Communities in Post-War South Australia: Reid Murray Developments, Realty Development Corporation and their successors', *Journal of the Historical Society of South Australia*, vol. 40, pp.96-116.

Marsden, Susan (2015), *A year-round holiday: the histories of West Lakes*, (Wakefield Press: Mile End).

***South Lakes Pamphlets all available at the State Library of South Australia***

RDC, (c.1966), 'South Lakes - An Exclusive Residential for Year-round Active Leisure'.

RDC, (c.1968) 'South Lakes'.

Anon, nd., ' South Lakes Conference Centre/Motel/restaurant Goolwa SA'.

Anon, nd., 'South Lakes Motel'.

Anon, nd., 'South Lakes Gold Club'.

Anon, nd., 'South Lakes Yacht Hire'.