

Enquiries: Rebecca Rutschack
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Dear Kirsteen,

Local Design Review Scheme for SA

Thank you for the opportunity for the City of Adelaide to consider the Local Design Review Scheme for South Australia and provide comment. The City of Adelaide values high quality design outcomes and understands the benefits of a consistent approach for the delivery of Local Design Review across the state. As a Capital City Council, we have outlined our unique perspective on this scheme along with wider opportunities and constraints below.

Feedback on Principles of Design Review

- We agree with the clear and concise Principles of Design Review.
- In particular, we agree with Design Review being timely. It is critical that Design Review happens very early in the design process. The reasons for this are outlined in more detail below in 'Observations'.

Feedback on Principles of Good Design

- We agree with ODASA's Principles of Good Design.
- At a local government level, we desire the same outcomes and share an equal commitment to achieving design excellence in City of Adelaide.

What the City of Adelaide currently offers

- The City of Adelaide is fortunate to have extensive professional skill sets in house – Planning, Architecture, Heritage Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Lighting Design, Urban Design, Waste Management, Traffic Planning & Design, Parking and Sustainability.
 - These disciplines are frequently enlisted in Council's advice on Schedule 10 developments.
 - We also provide advice and recommendations from each of these disciplines as required to a variety of projects below the Schedule 10 threshold at different points of the project cycle. This ranges from over-the-counter preliminary advice, to more formal pre-lodgment advice, to formal commentary on development submissions. Our staff in these areas offer skilled and timely advice that assists in shaping excellent project outcomes.
 - This service is free of charge. We have received positive comments from proponents about how our face to face service is highly valued and how they value the opportunity to meet over the course of the design process as the
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project evolves. We are able to provide these meetings at short notice and call in different professionals as required.

- We are fortunate to be able to offer the services of the proposed Local Design Review Scheme through our current service levels.

Observations

- It is noted that engaging in Local Design Review is voluntary.
- It could be assumed that most architects/designers would believe they are providing quality design for their clients, and that most clients/owners (who are not skilled in design) would believe that they are receiving good design. It may require unique project circumstances, or a unique client and architect relationship to voluntarily nominate for a review of design at any stage.
- Once a project's design has commenced and progressed, an architect/designer may be reluctant to nominate for Local Design Review in case they receive contradictory advice to that which they have given their client, and their client has paid for. To receive contradictory advice could undermine the client/architect relationship.
- Timing is critical here. For this Scheme to be truly effective and to preserve professional relationships, it would be prudent to offer Local Design Review at the very beginning of a project to set the project's parameters and expectations before the design has progressed, and then offer a subsequent review to ensure that the project is progressing in accordance with the preliminary advice that was given.
- There still needs to be an incentive for the client/proponent/designer to nominate for Design Review at all. Perhaps councils have certain project criteria where it becomes mandatory e.g. developments of 3 levels or more, development of a certain value range, student accommodation, or more than one potential dwelling on a site (the 'self-contained studio').
- It is noted that a panel could consist of just one person, and in that situation, it would need to be a registered architect. This would result in a proposal being reviewed by one 'expert' and the proponent receiving only one person's opinion. There would be a benefit in each panel offering more than one professional opinion to give a balanced review and advice.

Opportunities

- There is clearly an opportunity to shape better design outcomes.
- The City of Adelaide supports this incentive.

Constraints

- For many projects, time and cost are major considerations. This could be another constraint to the voluntary uptake of the Scheme. If it would incur additional cost to participate in Local Design Review, the review itself may lead to design changes which could trigger additional design fees, and all of this will add time to the project. This can add strain to the client and architect relationship.
- From council's perspective, there are significant financial outlays:
 - Registration fee paid to ODASA to be a part of the Scheme
 - Panel member remuneration
 - Resource implications on staff to administer the Scheme.
- If a Council chooses not to charge the proponent to encourage uptake, then they will incur significant fees from the professional disciplines that may be required. Understandably councils may seek to group projects for review (similar to monthly Council Assessment Panels) to seek economies in the costs of professional engagement, however this would cause delay for the proponent.

We understand that ODASA are going to 'pilot' Local Design Review with various councils and the City of Adelaide would like to discuss the opportunity of partaking in the pilot scheme. It would provide us with insight as to the likelihood of uptake from proponents, enable us to assess the impact on resourcing and critique the value of the review considering the service that we currently provide.

Again, thank you for the opportunity for the City of Adelaide to provide comment on the Local Design Review Scheme for SA.

Kind regards



Klinton Devenish
Director Place

