

Elisa Toome

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Submission to the DTI Planning Review

I live in a heritage home in North Adelaide and have completed several responses to Development Applications and this is a summary of my experiences.

Starting on a positive note I appreciate the requirement to place a notice on a development site so local residents are aware of what is proposed in their neighbourhood.

However there are many factors that actively discourage residents from providing feedback.

1. The system is extremely difficult for the average person to navigate. It is set up for developers who have the financial means to get professionals to complete their application. In order to respond to a development application residents have to read through copious amounts of information and respond to specific performance outcomes and development outcomes. I had concerned neighbours who wished to respond to a development application who were unclear about how to complete their response and lodge it as the process was so complex. One person was so confused they sent their response to the wrong development application.
2. Considering the amount of reading that is required a longer time limit to complete a response is needed.
3. It does not help when the system is shut for maintenance on the date the applications are due.
4. Planning and Design Codes prescribe height, density, heritage conservation and green space requirements for specific areas. These guidelines need to be followed and enforced. My experience is that developers are continually putting in proposals that exceed the Design Code requirements and having their developments approved despite them contravening the guidelines. The code is there so developers and residents are clear on what is allowed. They must be followed in fairness to all.
5. When it comes to the appeal process it is absolutely obvious that it favours developers. Developers have more rights to appeal than respondents. Each party should have equal rights.
6. Developers should not be able to overturn local and state heritage protection that buildings have had placed on them.
7. Planning needs to be planned. Any performance based development system can vary greatly to the design code and still get approved. This is a most unfair system.

I hope that the review leads to a fairer system where residents and developers have equal rights with clear enforcement of the Design Code.