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Submission to the DTI Planning Review

I own and live in a house in North Adelaide and have had several interactions with the Planning system. The current system leaves much to be desired.

My main concerns are listed below.

1. There needs to be greater certainty for all concerned and definitive quantitative limits.
2. There are not equal rights of appeal for developers and the community.
3. There is a community perception that developers can introduce variations to their development plans once construction is underway with less public scrutiny.
4. Representations made to development applications are not verified as genuine and coming from the supposed person.
5. The Planning system is difficult to navigate and the website is not mobile friendly.

Further details are given below.

1. There needs to be greater certainty for all concerned and definitive quantitative limits.

Under the current Performance Based assessment developers can put in proposal that are well in excess of the Planning and Design Code. Planning needs to include includes prescribing definitive height, density, heritage conservation, and criteria applicable to future desired character for precincts, neighbourhoods and main streets within localities. The current system invites ambit proposals from developers.

I have been involved with development applications that exceed the number of stories in the Design Code by 50%, 100% and 150%. These gross applications should not be allowed. Similarly development applications have asked to have the bulk and density far in excess of what the Planning and Design Code states.

There was one development application which involved the demolition of a Local Heritage Place. The demolition of a Heritage Place should not be considered in a development application; this should go through the correct process.

2. There are not equal rights of appeal for developers and the community.

Generally developers have more rights to appeal than neighbours or other concerned parties when a decision is made against their interest. In the interest of fairness, each party should have equal rights of appeal.

3. There is a community perception that developers can introduce variations to their development plans once construction is underway with less public scrutiny.

I understand that there are development applications which have been approved for a certain number of stories after a vigorous opposition. The developer starts construction and then applies for additional building levels, sometimes supposedly for “community housing”. The opposition has to then fight again and is left financially and emotionally exhausted.

4. Representations made to development applications are not verified as genuine and coming from the supposed person.

I recently was involved in a development application process. There were in excess of 80 representations made regarding the development, including one by myself. There was another representation made in my name using old contact details which was fraudulent and did not represent my views on the development. I know of one other representation which was definitely fraudulent. There was no checking at all of any of the other representations to confirm that they were actually made by the listed persons.

It would be relatively simple to have an automatic system that asked for confirmation by the supplied email address.

5. The Planning system is difficult to navigate and the website is not mobile friendly.

Having submitted representations to development applications under the previous scheme and the current process, I have found it difficult to formulate responses to development applications under the current Act and Design Code; the system could be much simpler.

The planning system on line at times is not mobile friendly. For example if I am searching the Development application register on my mobile device and I want to open several list development applications I cannot use the usual technique of opening the link in a new window by holding down the link (I get a new window with URL about:blank#blocked). On my desktop PC I can shift-click the Reference number or right-click the Reference number to open that development application in a new window.

I am prepared to provide more details or additional information if required.

Regards
C Harris