Local Design Review Scheme for South Australia

OUR NEW SYSTEM

Consultation Guide

June 2020

Government of South Australia
Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure

OFFICE FOR DESIGN + ARCHITECTURE SA

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Design Review is a pre-lodgement service that supports high-quality design outcomes, improves access to independent design expertise and assists with informed decision-making during development assessment.

Cover image by Sam Noonan

Introduction

Design quality of the built environment not only relates to the 'look and feel' of buildings and places, but how successfully they meet the needs of the people who use and experience them. High-quality design helps to make buildings and places better for people, our environment and economy.

The *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016* (PDI Act) enables South Australia's new planning system to place greater emphasis on high-quality design. One of the ways it will do this is by creating more opportunities to participate in Design Review under a new Local Design Review Scheme (the Scheme).

This draft Scheme sets out consistent procedural requirements for councils who wish to provide Local Design Review within their communities, as well as independent Design Review providers.

The Office for Design and Architecture South Australia (ODASA) has prepared the draft Scheme on behalf of the Minister for Planning in collaboration with the State Planning Commission, council staff from across the State and peak industry bodies who might provide Local Design Review.

Feedback on the draft Scheme is now being sought from councils, industry professionals and any other interested parties. It is envisaged the Local Design Review Scheme will come into operation with the Phase Three Planning and Design Code.

This consultation guide provides additional background information for the draft Local Design Review Scheme.

Design Review

Design Review is an independent evaluation process where a panel of built environment experts review the design quality of a development proposal before it is lodged for assessment.

The role of Design Review is not to redesign proposals, but rather to identify and discuss opportunities to encourage high-quality design.

Design Review provides the opportunity for proponents to obtain independent design advice from the panel. The design advice is a summary of the Design Review session and is provided to the proponent to assist with design development.

The design advice is also provided to the relevant authority for consideration during development assessment.

The benefits of Design Review include:

- supporting high-quality design
- improving access to independent and expert design advice early in the planning and design process
- supporting consistent and informed planning decisions
- facilitating collaboration between allied professionals that can positively contribute to professional development

Design discussion
Image by Sam Noonan

Design Review in South Australia

State Design Review has operated successfully in South Australia since 2011 and is currently available to larger-scale development proposals assessed by the State Commission Assessment Panel (SCAP) and referred to the South Australian Government Architect, including:

- developments with a value of $10 million or more within the City of Adelaide
- developments with a value of $3 million or more in Port Adelaide Regional Centre Zone (City of Port Adelaide Enfield)
- developments of five storeys or more in the:
  - » Inner Metropolitan Adelaide Urban Corridor Zones
  - » District Centre (Norwood) Zone (City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters)
  - » District Centre (Jetty Road) Zone and Residential High Density Zone (City of Holdfast Bay)

State Design Review will continue to be available for these projects in the new planning system.

For more information about State Design Review, please visit the ODASA website (odasa.sa.gov.au).

SA State Design Review session
Image by Sam Noonan

Design discussion
Image by Sam Noonan

Local Design Review

Councils across South Australia are increasingly offering design advisory services to proponents in varying formats. The draft Scheme is designed to establish a consistent approach to delivering Local Design Review that will support council staff, private sector professionals and proponents.

Local Design Review under the Scheme will be:

- optional for councils to make available
- available to classes of development that are specified in the Planning and Design Code before they are lodged for assessment
- voluntary for proponents
- advisory

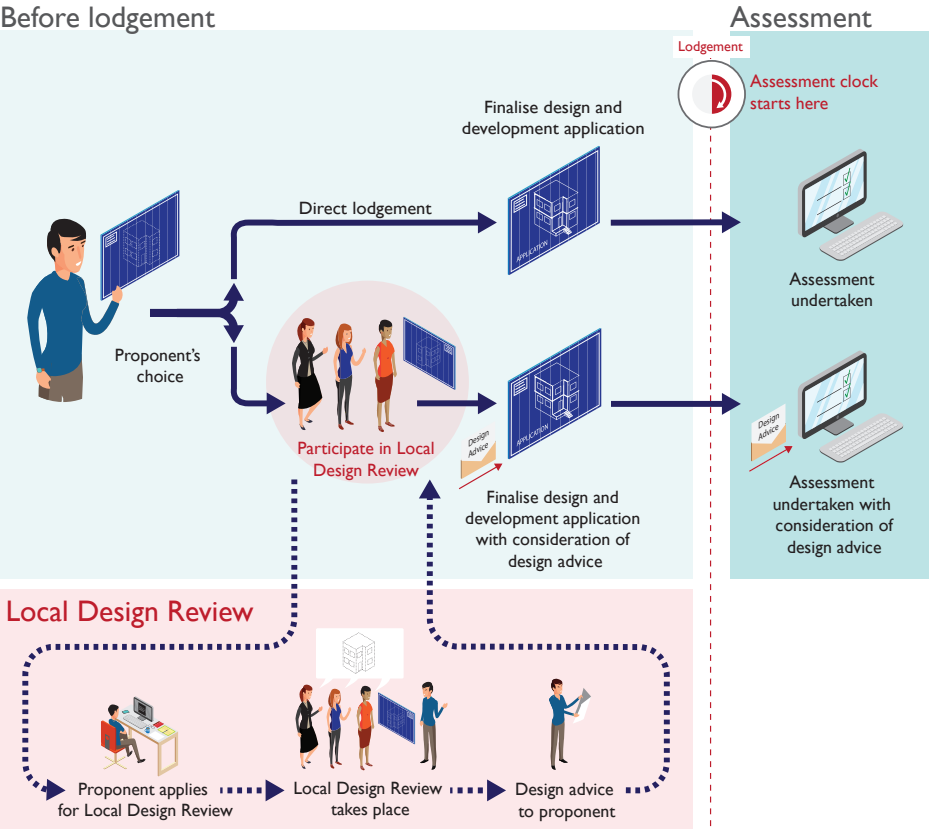
The PDI Act requires that any design advice provided by a design panel under the Local Design Review Scheme must be considered by the relevant authority during development assessment.

If a proponent chooses not to participate in Local Design Review, no design advice will be provided to the proponent or the relevant authority.

The diagram on the opposite page illustrates how Local Design Review will operate within the context of South Australia's planning process.

Design Review
Image by Sam Noonan

Local Design Review within the planning process



Features of the Local Design Review Scheme

Availability of Local Design Review (section 2.1 of the draft Scheme)

All councils in South Australia will have a choice whether or not to make Local Design Review available in their area. If so, the council will need to work with the State Planning Commission to specify the eligible classes of development in the Planning and Design Code (the Code). The classes of development may be identified spatially (via an Overlay) and/or by certain criteria, such as building height or development that affects a heritage place.

The process for including the eligible classes of development within the Code is currently being considered by the State Planning Commission and the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure (DPTI). Views on this are encouraged during consultation.

Provision of Local Design Review (section 2.2 of the draft Scheme)

The draft Scheme provides councils with flexibility for providing Local Design Review in their area:

1. a council may establish their own design panel; or
2. a group of councils may establish a joint design panel; or
3. a council may procure a design panel from an independent provider on an 'as needs' basis.

This flexibility is designed to provide councils with options when considering the availability of Local Design Review.

Registration to carry out Local Design Review (section 2.3 of the draft Scheme)

Registration under the draft Scheme would be required by those councils or independent providers who will establish their own design panel to carry out Local Design Review.

The diagram on the opposite page summarises the options for councils in relation to Local Design Review under the draft Scheme.

Options for council registration

Availability	Provision	Registration
Council decides to make Local Design Review available in their area. *Council will need to work with the State Planning Commission to specify the eligible classes of development and include them within the Planning and Design Code.*	Council decides to establish their own Local Design Review panel.	YES
	A group of councils decide to establish a joint Local Design Review panel.	
	Council decides not to establish their own Local Design Review panel. *Council will need to engage an independent provider if an application for Local Design Review is made.*	NO
Council decides not to make Local Design Review available in their area.		

Features of the Local Design Review Scheme

Panel member selection process (section 2.5 of the draft Scheme)

All independent providers and any councils who choose to establish their own or a joint Local Design Review panel will need to recruit panel members. The draft Scheme sets out the competencies in relation to the qualification and experience requirements for panel members.

Training (section 2.7 of the draft Scheme)

All panel members must complete an induction program that is in accordance with guidelines provided by the South Australian Government Architect before they can be involved in Local Design Review under the Scheme.

The induction program guidelines will be set out in guidance material once the Scheme is finalised.

Applying for Local Design Review (section 3.1 of the draft Scheme)

A proponent who wishes to participate in Local Design Review must apply to the council before lodging their development application for assessment. The PDI Act requires that a council must accept an application for Local Design Review if it is for a class of development that is specified in the Code.

Undertaking Local Design Review (Part 4 of the draft Scheme)

The specific roles and responsibilities for individuals involved in a Local Design Review session are identified in the draft Scheme.

Preparing design advice (Part 5 of the draft Scheme)

The draft Scheme sets out the process for preparing design advice and providing it to the proponent in a timely manner. It is intended that design advice is provided to the proponent within 10 business days after a Local Design Review session takes place.

A standardised template for drafting design advice will be included in guidance material once the Scheme is finalised.

Data collection and sharing (section 6.1 of the draft Scheme)

Every registered council or independent body will be required to collect data on all projects that undergo Local Design Review. It is envisaged that the South Australian Government Architect will use this data to prepare a report on Local Design Review.

Complaint management (section 6.4 of the draft Scheme)

A proponent who participates in Local Design Review may lodge a complaint in relation to a process or outcome under the Scheme. The complaint must be lodged with the council or independent provider who will have the primary opportunity to manage and resolve the matter.

Code of conduct (Part 7 of the draft Scheme)

All persons or bodies who operate under the Scheme will be subject to a statutory duty outlined in Section 15 of the PDI Act.

A council or independent body registered under the Scheme may prepare additional code of conduct requirements that must be read in conjunction with the requirements under the PDI Act.

Guidance material

The finalised Local Design Review Scheme will be accompanied by a guide that will be designed to support councils and independent providers who register to carry out Local Design Review. The guide will provide centralised and up-to-date information, advice and tools that may offer assistance with:

- design panel member recruitment
- training and induction requirements
- preparing for a successful Design Review session
- drafting design advice (including any templates)
- data collection
- any other useful information

The guide will be produced and maintained by ODASA.

Have your say

The draft Local Design Review Scheme is available for public comment until Friday 21 August 2020.

Feedback received will help to finalise the Local Design Review Scheme for South Australia.

Please ensure you provide your feedback on the draft Scheme through any of the following channels:

- **Email:** DPTI.ODASAconsultation@sa.gov.au
- **Online:** yoursay.sa.gov.au/local-design-review-scheme
- **Post:** ODASA Consultation, 28 Leigh Street, Adelaide SA 5000

If you would like to speak with someone about Local Design Review, please contact the Office for Design and Architecture South Australia (ODASA) on 8402 1884 during business hours (9am – 5pm, weekdays).

For more information about South Australia's new planning system, please visit the SA Planning Portal (saplanningportal.sa.gov.au).

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