

Local Design Review in South Australia

Supporting good
design in your
community



OFFICE FOR
DESIGN +
ARCHITECTURE SA



Government of South Australia
Attorney-General's Department

Every new development has the potential to improve our quality of life, attract investment and reduce our impact on the environment.

Why design quality matters

Each year planners and assessment authorities across the state see high-volumes of new development proposals that all have the potential to support high-quality design and contribute positively to our built environments.

The visual appeal of a building or place is one of the most immediate factors that we respond to. While appearance is an important consideration, our response to it - positive or negative - can be subjective and not informed by overall functionality or performance.

Design quality not only relates to the 'look and feel' of buildings and places, but also to 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 the economy.

There is comprehensive academic and scientific research available that explores the many benefits of well-designed places and the negative effects that poor design can have on our lives.^{1, 2, 3}

This research demonstrates that good design can support public health, wellbeing and safety, improve environmental quality and social connectedness, reduce operating and maintenance costs, and increase productivity.

As the links between design, human behaviour and health are better understood, we have a responsibility to use this evidence to inform our decision making about the shape and future of our cities, buildings and communities.

1. Office of the Victorian Government Architect, *The Case for Good Design: a guide for government*, 2019, Melbourne.
2. Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), *The value of good design*, 2002, London.
3. Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), *The cost of bad design*, 2006, London.

Local Design Review Scheme

The Local Design Review Scheme (the Scheme) provides a consistent state-wide approach for councils to provide Design Review for locally assessed development proposals.

Design Review in South Australia is an independent evaluation process where a panel of built environment experts (such as architects, landscape architects and urban designers) review a development proposal before it is lodged for assessment. The role of the panel is not to redesign proposals, but rather to identify opportunities to encourage high-quality design. Design Review is most effective when undertaken early to effect positive change.

The Scheme aims to:

- support high-quality design
- improve access to independent and expert advice early in the planning and design process
- support consistent and informed planning decisions
- facilitate collaboration between allied professionals
- support the State's planning system to meet objects and principles in the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016*.

Benefits of Local Design Review

Offering Design Review sends a strong public message that design quality is an important consideration in your community.

Design Review provides a respected and tested approach to support good design, respond positively to local character, assist the development of better planning policy, and helps to avoid the negative and long-lasting impacts of poor design.

Additional benefits include:

- promoting collaboration between council staff, allied professionals and developers to help build certainty and confidence in the approvals process
- supporting developers and design teams to prioritise design quality and produce buildings and places that provide lasting community benefits
- providing access to independent expertise that may not be readily available during development assessment.

Confidently and objectively supporting high-quality outcomes requires access to design expertise. The Local Design Review Scheme provides a trusted method of building this capacity.

Further information

The Office for Design and Architecture SA looks forward to collaborating with interested participants to ensure that Local Design Review is well established from the outset, able to meet demand and is delivered consistently across the state.

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Image by Sam Noonan