Please add this to my submission as a heartfelt postscript:


Planning and planners can make or break the sort of lifestyle we have always enjoyed in South Australia – and now it is all down to the new Planning Act and a new Planning Design Code.

Yours sincerely
Carol

Carol Bailey
Members of the State Planning Commission have recently admitted that the “green canopy” of many of our once leafy suburbs is being lost. Stately old homes, well designed and constructed homes of the 1950s-1970s are being replaced with multiple storey units which go from boundary to boundary – while our ecologists warn of biodiversity loss and decline in human health as well as extinction of native flora and fauna in our cities and suburbs. Only changes to planning can change this. Planning must envisage future living standards and protection of native biodiversity – not merely economic benefit. Long term resilience and health of future communities has been omitted from planning.

The Significant and Regulated Tree Act of 2011 (where a great many submissions were ignored by Government) has ensured that no tree can be saved – significant or otherwise! These submissions should be revisited! Limited protection to the girth size of a tree was a flawed process since so many trees (e.g. native species such as Mallee) will never achieve such girth size – despite centuries of age. Where a suburb has a significant ‘green canopy’ (or there is potential for restoring it) this needs to be considered. In Mount Barker – a formerly green, rural town with tree-lined roads and streets - a failure to apply a minimum allotment size (per State Government) and adequate infrastructure is creating a future ghetto in the “Ministerial DPA” and unenvisaged traffic mayhem on a daily basis.

Clearly ‘planning’ which is done as nothing more than a ‘rezoning exercise’ at the behest of developers is no way to achieve good planning or good community outcomes but leaves an inter-generational legacy to the Council and ratepayers who must support borrowing and debt to achieve the enormous infrastructure needs for the new growth.

To force a small town from 12,000 inhabitants to the second largest city in the State within two decades is not in any way good or sensible planning. No plan should be permitted to proceed without a detailed ‘Structure Plan’ which shows where (and how) future schools, ovals, sports grounds, cycle paths, and amenities will go (and be paid for). To have permitted developers to acquire land at rural prices and then place a council in the position of having to provide all the infrastructure (and land) at residential prices should be a lesson which ensures that in future no such ‘rezoning’ can occur without a detailed Structure Plan and provision of infrastructure and land for public use.

No-one is very sure about the “accredited professionals” but the expression that now ‘all the foxes’ will have access to the henhouse is commonly heard. It is to be hoped that this does not mean ‘open slather’ for big developers who can well afford a team of accredited professionals.

The problem of how Councils will be able to retain the unique character of their small towns when this relies on a number of contributory items which contribute to this ‘unique character’ rather than what might be just a few ‘State listed’ buildings remains to be seen. That there is a distinct difference between ‘state heritage’ and ‘character’ is very obvious, since the latter clearly ‘contributes’ to the former and should not be considered any less important.

Under Standard Conditions
2.1
(a) First landscape condition should be submission and approval of a detailed landscape plan prior to development approval being granted. Submission alone is inadequate.

(b) Re. site management – should apply to all sites. On this point why is topsoil permitted to be removed and sold? It should be stored temporarily on site or relocated for use nearby. Soil is the first rung in the ladder of the biodiversity, so while ecologists, environmentalists and biologists keep screaming about biodiversity loss and extinctions in Adelaide and ‘Greater Adelaide’ our State Planning Department oversees the scraping off and export of millions of tonnes of topsoil each year. All the microfauna and fungal organisms which support life are contained within this soil. If any of our vanishing biodiversity is to be saved, then topsoil needs to be valued and retained wherever possible.

(c) Stormwater Plan - needs to be submitted and also approved pursuant to current, up to date floodplain mapping studies (which are corrected for climate change impacts/modelling).

(l) Re. animal keeping there should be a potential for monitoring and achieving compliance standards.
5.7 Re. ‘Deemed to satisfy’ and “Performance Assessed” the required parameters should be clearly set down as to maximum height, width, distance from boundary, set back and so on. Many home sites and street fronts have ambiguous ‘additions’, pergolas or carports which are out of perspective with the streetscape.

Climate change is an emergency which must be recognised and included in all planning, not least of all built development where it is more important than ever before to zone for bushfire risk, flooding risk and surely new buildings should be mandated to be sustainable in terms of orientation, insulation, eaves, verandahs (missing from the majority of current housing) to ensure low energy (sustainable) housing rather than the energy guzzling ‘boxes’ in most of the housing estates.

If planning is to be brought up to date then climate change must be at its core and the Planning Design Code must also consider and make urgent recommendations so that the future Building Codes will complement the Design Code not be at odds with it. Planning changes are welcomed, but only if they deliver the best possible outcomes for communities.

Schedule 4 (4) (I) (h)
A fence 3.1m high is not to be classed as ‘development’ yet this type of structure is usually reserved for fencing exotic animals, native wildlife etc. What place does this have in any urban situation? Perhaps the dingo/dog fence is a consideration in this context – since areas outside council areas are being considered first. I hope this is so.

Rainwater tanks and shade sails need to be considered in the context of siting and visual amenity and should be kept to backyards, since either can be very large and intrusive with regard to amenity of a streetscape or a neighbour’s view.

I thank you for the opportunity to make a submission and look forward to receiving details of the new Design Code and how in future we will plan to retain more trees and shrubs in our landscape, encourage gardens to nurture bees and insects and build future resilience into our communities. Good planning can achieve this. I also look forward with interest to how both heritage listed items and smaller buildings, cottages and objects which contribute to the overall character of our small towns will be valued and protected in the future by our Planning Act/Code.

Yours sincerely,

Carol Bailey

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