

DEVELOPMENT (PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REVIEW) AMENDMENT BILL

February 3, 2009

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (12:14): I rise, too, to support the Development (Planning and Development Review) Amendment Bill. I note that this bill implements a residential development code, and it is understood that, if they do not fit into that code, developments can still be assessed under the normal merit-based processes; therefore, the code will simplify the planning system and not enforce further restrictions.

Some of the amendments in which the opposition was interested included block size, heritage character and setbacks. These are believed to have been addressed in the regulations. I refer to block size. The regulations state that if a site does not comprise an entire allotment, the site must meet the minimum site area prescribed in a council's development plan. This gives local councils the ability to determine what its council area will look like in terms of infill. Where the allotment is divided—that is, where you might demolish a bungalow and erect two or three flats—councils will set the minimum size allotment.

Regarding heritage, parts of the regulations will also address additions and alterations, outbuildings, carports and verandahs, swimming pools, spa pools, shade sails, water tanks, solar voltaic cells, internal building work and demolition. These things will not apply if the development is on a site where a state heritage place or a local heritage place is situated. This will ensure that local government does its homework and manages its local heritage and character issues. As we said earlier, certainly there are plenty of these issues throughout the metropolitan area, for example, Unley and Colonel Light Gardens, which is a heritage suburb, and people have to comply with the various rulings.

As far as consultation is concerned, most stakeholders were generally happy with the regulations. Some people think they may need some minor changes, but it was mentioned previously that this legislation (if enacted) will be live and need plenty of discussion moving forward, as planning matters have over time. Two issues not involved in the current version of the regulations are sustainability energy efficiency and the appearance of buildings to the street. In the earlier version of the regulations, the opening to a garage could be up to 50 per cent of the frontage. This has been changed to seven metres. Some of these issues may need to be resolved through further consultation with the government.

The Local Government Association indicates that the current version of the regulations incorporates most of its important concerns. They include very important issues to local communities of minimum allotment size, as I indicated earlier, front and rear setbacks, the nature of cladding used on outbuildings, etc., and many other matters of planning detail where changes have also been made to version 10 of the code on the advice of councils and the Local Government Association, because obviously local government is at the forefront when managing development. Other issues may have to be worked through, with further negotiations with the government. Other people have said that the move forward is very positive.

In general terms, sometimes development can be a controversial issue. Certainly plans need to be in place—good plans—but sometimes we get bogged down in the nitty-gritty of getting something to happen. In this world, you will get people who do not want to change a thing, but if we did not change anything, we would all still be living in caves. We must have not only good development, good and proper planning and protection for heritage sites but we must also remember that we do need to move forward as well. Sometimes this can be controversial, but I think the new code will help cut through some of the issues.

I have concerns about some local councils. If you want to see plans for an allotment adjoining your property, you cannot have them faxed to you. I live in the country at Coomandook and I have a property in Adelaide where I reside when I am in Adelaide. I guess I am an absent landholder, and it would be far easier for me to have something faxed to me. That is a local council issue. Fax machines are now old technology. In this world of technology, an email—which is instantaneous—could be sent to me. Mind you, it takes a while to crank it up on the wireless broadband at Coomandook.

A few of those matters could be picked up at a local government level, especially in relation to people who are absent landholders; and it could be the other way around for people in the city who have property in the country. Several members in this place would have property in the country. In order to streamline planning issues and enable consultation it needs to happen. Proper consultation should be undertaken, especially when multistorey developments are being built, in order to enable neighbours to know where the decks, entertaining areas and windows will be situated. Most of this is covered through local councils and I do urge that it continue. If it is not happening in some areas, then it should be enforced.

A few developments are occurring in my electorate. I note that the racecourse development on the southern side of the freeway near Murray Bridge is up for discussion as we speak. If it goes ahead, it will increase Murray Bridge by 50 per cent as we move forward. I commend the Murray Bridge Racing Club on the initiative and for funding it mainly on its own, if not totally on its own. It will be a great boon for the area. The minister is well aware of an ongoing proposal to develop the railway land. That proposal is being held up with negotiations at a local level with some local stakeholders, but I hope it moves forward in an appropriate manner. I hope to see a conference centre and a five-star accommodation centre being built in Murray Bridge.

There is a long way to go with that proposal, and there will be discussions around what old railway houses remain and what do not remain. I refer to my earlier remarks: we need to consider what we need to retain—and be sensible about what needs to go—and manage it. I know there will be plenty of discussion, but there is an opportunity in the future as long as water is flowing down the great River Murray—because that is the location of this site. I urge all governments to do whatever they can to get more water down that river—but that is an aside. The development of this land will be a great boon, not just for Murray Bridge but also for tourism in the area. Everything needs a lift down there. I commend the bill and note that the opposition supports it.