

Foley Submission

Background

27 year local

Prev Chair of Historic Places Trust local branch

Prev on QLDC Urban Design Panel

Prev undertook review of delivery of RMA services to change from CivicCorp back to Council

Current Chair WHSF

Completed several residential developments

Working on a Resort Development with a VA overlay on low density residential site.

I don't believe this document was intended to be enshrined into the RMA process. The design guidelines are now proposed to become effectively rules covering all residential zones.

The residential zones are huge and sprawling in our district and the residences and other buildings express differing site attributes as well as the desire of property owners to express their own tastes and desires through their designers.

Areas or zones that do currently have design controls such as Arrowtown and QT CBD are quite different in that they have a built environment that provides for typology, character or a strong heritage element rather than our general residential areas. The residential areas this guide covers is already populated by a huge range of architectural styles reflecting the periods in which they were built, the economy of the time, types of materials available and peoples own intentions.

What is being proposed by the QLDC here is a set of Restricted Discretionary design rules not guides which enables any application to be turned down if the applicant does not follow any of the rules.

Essentially putting the applicant and their design consultants into a straight jacket where you have to work through the design "guide book" and tick all the boxes. This will stymie innovation at the least. Some would go as far as to suggest a level of social engineering.

As a property developer I have strived to complete projects that compliment the qualities of a site and the context of the environment. I employ design consultants and pay huge amounts of money for them to design projects of value both in the built form and economic outcome. So are we now supposed to co-design these projects with the QLDC planning team and their independent contractor consultants that are now engaged to review a significant number of applications ?

Property owners should be entitled to submit applications and designs of their own making and with due respect to the current planning rules.

Just who is the most qualified ? The land owner and his/her Architect and consulting team OR the planners handling 30-40 applications each and most with only a few years experience in practice ?

These Design Guide can work well in recognising the limitations of non-designers working under the district plan and the RMA but QLDC are targeting the lowest common denominator in imposing this across all applicants in the residential areas.

The current district plan already provides broad provisions that push for quality outcomes and there is no reason to overlay the guidelines on top of that.

Just how would such a wide ranging document work in practice other than to provide Council planners with such a wide discretion that developers could never rely on the plan as a reference point for compliance. The process would become even more onerous than is currently the case.

QLDC Planning Dept has operated under significant workload over many years and as is evident by the amount of work contracted out and continual staff rotation – has anyone considered how they would match this increase in application scrutiny and discretion around compliance with regulatory delivery capacity.