

Frequently Asked Questions



Reviewing planning rules for Festival Plaza

Q – Why are the planning rules for Festival Plaza being reviewed?

A – The South Australian Government is reviewing the planning rules for Festival Plaza to ensure this prime location in Adelaide’s city centre provides the greatest benefits for the state and our community.

Aspects such as building height, siting, contribution to public space and relationships to heritage buildings such as Parliament House are all important planning considerations for new development in the precinct.

The draft Festival Plaza Code Amendment reviews the planning rules, focussing on providing clear building height and design guidance, to ensure the remaining development site is maximised to make Festival Plaza a world-class hub for the arts, culture, tourism and entertainment.

The review also aims to ensure that planning rules for this important area are consistent with the South Australian Government’s vision for the broader riverbank precinct.

Q – What building height guidance is in the draft Festival Plaza Code Amendment?

A – A concept plan for Festival Plaza is included in the draft Code Amendment, which identifies an appropriate location for buildings taller than 20 levels, or 71 metres, and provides a policy framework that could allow up to 40 levels, subject to appropriate building design.

The existing planning rules do not set a maximum building height. They provide general guidance for development higher than 20 building levels so they are of exemplary design and have minimal impact on the River Torrens.

The draft Code Amendment aims to strengthen the planning rules for buildings more than 20 levels high by requiring them to align with the concept plan.

It also specifies buildings higher than 20 levels must positively contribute to the local setting and deliver:

- exemplary design quality and architecture that is contemporary and innovative and respectful of the heritage buildings, Adelaide Park Lands setting and civic functions of the locality
- a quality public space that is inviting and comfortable for pedestrians

- strong connections between important buildings, public spaces, the Adelaide Park Lands and other key destinations.

View the concept plan for Festival Plaza on the back page of this document.

Q – What building design guidance is in the draft Festival Plaza Code Amendment?

A – The concept plan included in the draft Code Amendment encourages development that clearly defines Festival Plaza and is designed to:

- preserve an unobstructed physical and visual connection to culturally important buildings, including Adelaide Festival Theatre and the Parliament House balcony
- preserve the national and state heritage values and views of Parliament House by maintaining an appropriate setback from the northern façade
- encourage public interaction, activity and safety by establishing continuous active frontages along the southern edge of Festival Plaza.

Q – What other changes to the planning rules are proposed in the draft code amendment?

A – The draft code amendment removes wording from a ‘designated performance feature’ that provides guidance to ensure buildings in the Entertainment Subzone of the Riverbank Zone, including Festival Plaza, are of a height and scale that references North Terrace and minimises impacts on the River Torrens.

The wording can be misinterpreted to suggest that buildings greater than 20 stories should be located along the River Torrens.

The wording to be removed is:

Except where adjacent to the River Torrens, buildings not exceeding 20 building levels and 71 m in building height.

Q – Does the draft code amendment impact on the Adelaide Park Lands?

A – Festival Plaza is located in the Adelaide Park Lands. This draft Code Amendment does not change any of the planning zones that apply to Festival Plaza or the broader park lands, nor remove Festival Plaza from being part of park lands.

The draft Code Amendment focusses on providing clear building height and design guidance, and strengthening the existing planning rules for buildings higher than 20 levels in Festival Plaza.

For any future development of Festival Plaza resulting from this draft Code Amendment, impacts on the Adelaide Park Lands would be assessed as part of a development application for the site.

Key organisations such as City of Adelaide and Kadaltilla/Adelaide Park Lands Authority would be invited to provide their feedback on the development application.

Q – How does the draft code amendment take heritage buildings such as Parliament House into consideration for new development in Festival Plaza?

A – The draft Code Amendment includes setbacks to retain views of heritage sites such as the Adelaide Festival Centre and Parliament House.

It also ensures active frontages along key areas to encourage public interaction and maintain a balance between building height, human scale and urban massing.

These considerations in the draft Code Amendment follow recommendations from the urban design review carried out to inform the draft Code Amendment.

Q – What planning zones and sub zones does the draft Festival Plaza Code Amendment apply to?

A – The draft code amendment reviews the planning rules for the:

- City Riverbank Zone
- Entertainment Subzone.

It focusses on ensuring the zone and subzone provide clear guidance for building height, location and design guidance within the Festival Plaza area.

Q – What upgrades and developments have recently been completed at Festival Plaza?

A – Recent upgrades and development have renewed Festival Plaza as a cultural and entertainment hub in the centre of Adelaide.

These improvements include:

- redeveloping the public plaza, including a new five-level underground car park
 - the new SkyCity Casino building
 - enhancements to the Festival Centre and surrounding areas
 - a new northern entrance to the railway station concourse
 - completion of the 29-storey One Festival Tower.
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Q – Is a tower building proposed for the remaining development site in Festival Plaza?

A – A 38-storey mixed-use tower alongside the One Festival Tower has been proposed to complete renewal of Festival Plaza.

However, this development has not yet been submitted for planning approvals and will undergo a separate assessment process under the independent State Commission Assessment Panel.

This draft code amendment does not consider this specific proposed development but would provide building height and design guidance for any future development in Festival Plaza.

Therefore, changes to the planning rules through this code amendment would guide whether the proposed 38-storey building is the highest and best use of the precinct's remaining development site, considering its relationship with national and state heritage listed Parliament House and opportunities to create public space.

Q – What is the South Australian Government's vision for the wider riverbank precinct?

A – The riverbank's entertainment precinct is the heart of activity, vibrancy and visitor economy, including Festival Plaza, Adelaide Convention Centre, Intercontinental Hotel, Adelaide Festival Centre and Sky City Casino.

It attracts millions of interstate and international visitors to the state, and many will spend extensive time within this small part of the city.

The South Australian Government's vision for the wider riverbank precinct is to deliver a world-class health, sporting, educational and biomedical precinct with strong connections to the city centre, as well as reinforcing North Terrace as a premier cultural boulevard.

There has been strong recent investment in the precinct, including the Sky City Casino, Riverbank Footbridge development, Adelaide Convention Centre and Festival Plaza development.

The South Australian Government is progressing further initiatives in the riverbank precinct that are significant to the state, including the proposed new Women's and Children's Hospital.

Q – Why have the planning rules in this draft code amendment come into effect at the same time as being released for consultation?

A – The draft Festival Plaza Code Amendment has come into '[early commencement](#)', which means the draft rules come into effect on an interim basis at the same time as being released for consultation.

The early commencement process is used when the Minister considers that the rule changes need to be applied immediately in the interests of orderly and proper development and to counter applications for undesirable development.

This draft Code Amendment has come into effect on an interim basis at the same time as being released for consultation to ensure undesirable development applications are not submitted for this important precinct while the planning rules for Festival Plaza are reviewed.

Q – How is a development application assessed during the ‘early commencement’ period, while the draft Code Amendment is open for consultation?

A – If a development application is lodged during the ‘[early commencement](#)’ period, the application must be assessed against the previous version of the Code as well as the version of the Code that has commenced early.

If the outcome of the assessment differs, a decision cannot be made until the Code Amendment is no longer on ‘early commencement’.

If the version of the Code that commenced early decreases the consultation requirements, then the original version of the Code must be used for assessment purposes.

Q – Where can I find out more details about the draft Festival Plaza Code Amendment?

A – For further details about the draft code amendment and how to provide feedback:

- visit the YourSAy website at: yoursay.sa.gov.au/festival-plaza
- attend an online information session:
 - 26 September, 11:00 am to 12:00 noon, register on Eventbrite
 - 15 October, 5:00 pm to 6:00 pm, register on [Eventbrite](#).
- call PlanSA on: 1800 752 664
- email PlanSA on: PlanSA@sa.gov.au

Q – How can I provide feedback on the draft Festival Plaza Code Amendment?

A – All feedback is encouraged to be provided via the YourSAy website, where you can complete a short survey and share your views.

You can have your say by:

- visiting the YourSAy website and taking our survey: yoursay.sa.gov.au/festival-plaza
- emailing a submission to: plansasubmissions@sa.gov.au
(subject: Submission – Festival Plaza Code Amendment)
- posting your written submission to: Attention: Code Amendment Team, Planning and Land Use Services, GPO Box 1815, Adelaide SA 5001

Consultation closes 5 pm, 24 October 2024.

Q – What are the next steps?

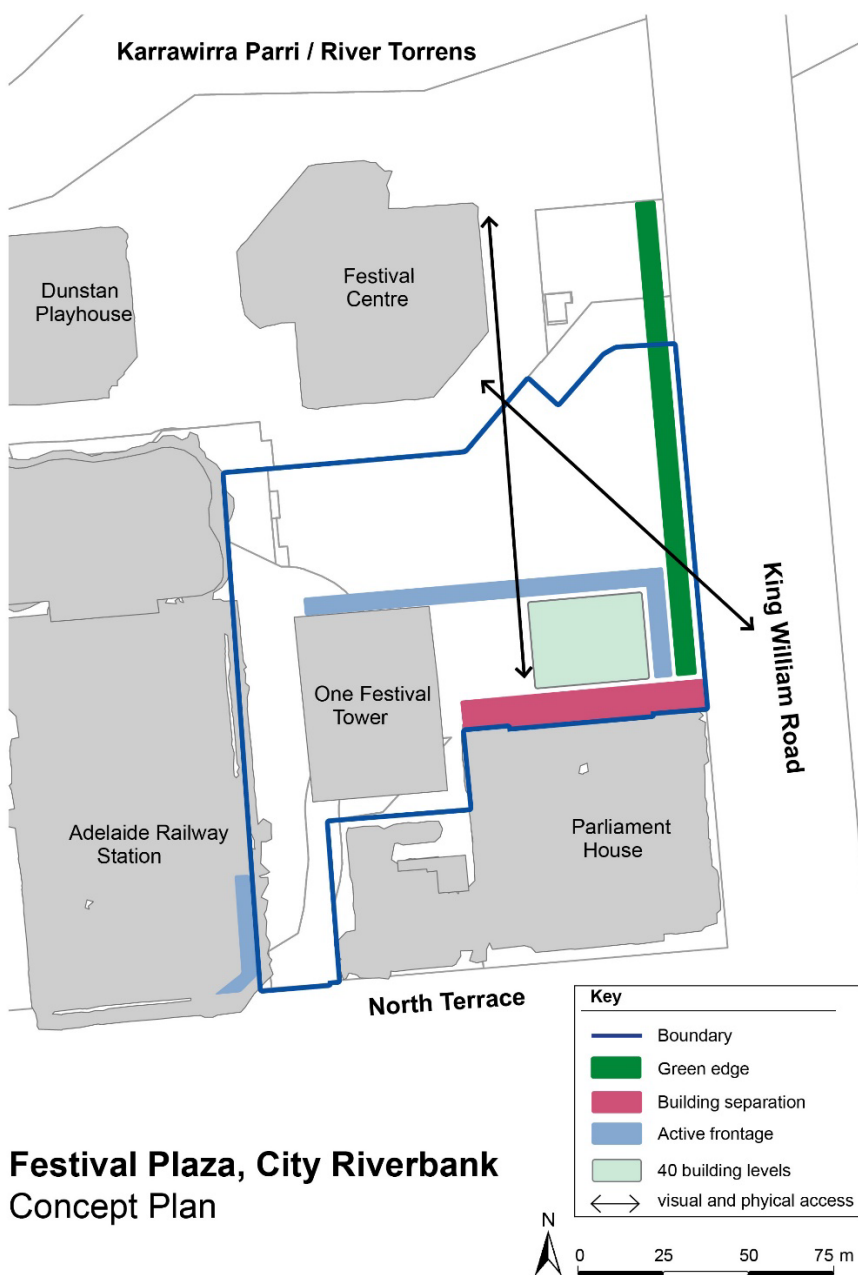
A – We will consider all feedback in finalising the draft Festival Plaza Code Amendment and all feedback will be captured in an engagement report.

The engagement report will be provided to the Minister for Planning to assist with final decision-making.

Once a decision has been made, the engagement report, including all feedback received during consultation, will be published on this webpage and the PlanSA website.

Note: names and organisations will be published in the engagement report with submissions. Addresses, email addresses and phone numbers will not be published.

Image: Proposed concept plan for Festival Plaza



**Festival Plaza, City Riverbank
Concept Plan**