



# The Advertiser

## The value of appropriate development

THE start of development at the former Le Cornu site at 88 O'Connell St, North Adelaide, early next year finally will bring to a close an embarrassing chapter in the history of Adelaide's development.

Unfortunately, too many chapters yet remain open. Victoria Square, the Victoria Park racecourse, and a long list of developments which are deemed too high or too modern stand as evidence to the criticism that the Adelaide City Council is anti-development, or at least anti-progressive.

This is not to advocate development at all costs. There clearly needs to be a balance, and development must be appropriate and sympathetic to its surrounds.

This is as true for the centre of the city as it is for the suburbs.

There are some good examples. The redevelopment of North Terrace, the development surrounding Victoria Square and the revitalisation of the Waymouth St business precinct spring to mind.

But more ambitious developments also need to be considered.

Councillors have argued that Con Makris, who owns the Le Cornu site, was trying it on, knowing his original seven-storey development was well outside the planning parameters for that site.

They were right, but sometimes developers should be encouraged to re-align their vision, rather than be blocked before the first hurdle by a planning rule book wielded by narrow interest groups.

The risk posed in the "by the book" approach is that the heart of Adelaide will stagnate, as investment money flows to areas where it is welcomed and new ideas are nurtured.

Adelaide could be considered lucky that Mr Makris, who believes in his home city, owns the site and is determined to develop it.

Interstate or overseas investors would have long ago thrown up their hands in disgust and walked away.

The State Government was right to strip the Adelaide City Council of its planning powers last year for projects worth more than \$10 million.

What this has done, however, is erode

the significance of the council, prompting many questions, most of all: Is it time for major council reform?

Is it time that the massive majority of people who use the city each day, mostly workers, get the right to vote on who shapes their city?

The relevance of metropolitan Adelaide's council structure, where some councils stretch from Port Adelaide almost to the central business district, while others cover just a handful of suburbs, also should be reassessed.

The city and the state need planning structures which do more than manage "roads, rates and rubbish".

We need organisations which are forward-looking and can revitalise the city and its surrounds.

What we do not need is another decade or two of debate while sites around Adelaide remain undeveloped, hostage to the narrow interests of a handful of councillors, elected in turn by a handful of Adelaide residents.