

The Advertiser, Wednesday August 6th, 2008

Staff review call in city planning fight

RUSSELL EMMERSON

THE battle over city development has become personal with a former deputy lord mayor calling for an urgent review of all city planning staff, a call the council has described as defamatory.

Mark Hamilton, elected deputy lord mayor in 1992, has vowed to make the State Government's decision to strip Adelaide City Council of planning powers this month an election issue in the 2010 State election.

"I think it was an over-reaction of the highest order. It was a payback to the council for taking on Victoria Park," he said.

The matter may gain further traction with Greens MLC Mark Parnell last week saying he would try to overturn the State Government's action.

Council's planning department has come under fire with a call from Mr Hamilton for an urgent review of planning staff.

Mr Hamilton's call echoes Councillor Sandy Wilkinson's

criticisms of the planning department during the rejection of the Aspen Group's \$180 million Tower 8 office block proposal this month.

But the Adelaide City Council this week attacked the "defamatory allegations" in Mr Hamilton's statement.

"The defamatory imputations... made against planning staff are, when properly viewed in the context of the task required of them, unfair, unreasonable and totally inappropriate," it stated.