



Existing buildings at 20-26 Cross St, Double Bay.



Artist impression of how the six-storey Cross St building would look.

DOUBLE BAY

High-rise debate reaches new low

Emails amount to 'blackmail' say councillors

Kate Bastians

WOOLLAHRA councillors say they have been subjected to a vitriolic campaign "bordering on blackmail" from residents opposing proposals for six-storey developments in Double Bay.

The public gallery was full last Tuesday night as debate raged over two applications to build units at adjacent sites on Cross St—the Hunters Arcade and 20-26 Cross St—opposite the InterContinental hotel. Both items were deferred.

Councillors Susan Wynne and Andrew Petrie said they had suffered a torrent of "intimidating" and "offensive" emails from some residents.

They took particular offence to a flyer letterboxed to residents encouraging people to email eight councillors with the message: "No six-storey buildings in four-storey height

zones and that we will remember how you vote at the next election."

Ms Wynne said this "bordered on blackmail" and she had never experienced this level of intimidation in her eight years as a councillor.

"I would hope what they do remember at the next election is how much time councillors give to the community and how we follow due process in all decisions," she said.

Cr Petrie point-blank described the flyer as a form of blackmail. "When they are saying to councillors, 'if you don't do what we want, we are going to take it out on you at the ballot box', it's blackmail."

Double Bay Residents Association president Mark Silcocks denied the association had produced the flyer, which had the association's name printed on the bottom.

In an email to councillors,

Mr Silcocks apologized "any derogatory, intimidating language in this debate".

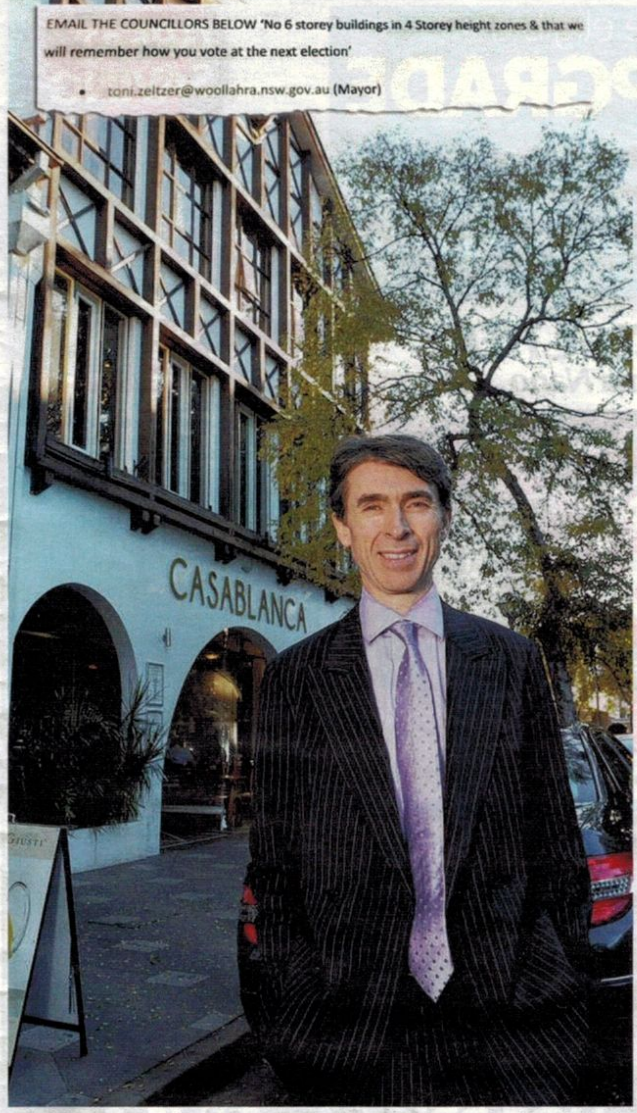
"I'm sure you'll agree we can't control what our members or residents do," he said.

Mr Silcocks described the association's official correspondence to council as "open, honest and well-reasoned".

He said it would be "unreasonable" to approve six storeys where current controls allow a maximum of four.

"The low-rise feel of Double Bay is part of its attraction as Sydney's stylish suburb," he said.

Buildings at 20-26 Cross St would be demolished to make way for 100 units, six retail units, a cafe/restaurant, Hunters Arcade, home to the Cross St nightclub, would be reformed into three retail units with an arcade and 10



Double Bay Residents Association president Mark Silcocks dissociates his group from the email (above).



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