

DOUBLE BAY

Residents ready to fight

Group hires experts to battle council's density expansion plan

Kate Bastians

THE Double Bay Residents Association has hired its own experts to spearhead its fight against Woollahra Council's plans to increase density in the prestigious suburb.

The association has engaged an urban planner and a co-founder of global property giant Colliers International to challenge recommendations made in a study into the economic feasibility of the Double Bay commercial centre.

The study, prepared for the council by Hill PDA Consulting, found there was "insufficient financial incentive" to redevelop four out of six test sites in the centre under existing planning controls.

It recommended the council consider increasing the permitted floor space ratio by 20 to 40 per cent to boost Double Bay's population by up to 1000.

But a submission prepared on behalf of the association by urban planning firm aSquare found population increases could be achieved through changes to Council's controls on unit size and dwelling mix.

"Changing the existing built form controls (such as) height and floor space ratio, is not necessary," it concluded.

Retired Woollahra valuer and Colliers International co-founder David Collier's report found "discrepancies in the content and value approach in the Hill PDA report that do not support the premise that height and bulk controls needed to be increased by 20 to 40 per cent".

"It is my view that, far from proving that sites in the centre cannot be profitably redeveloped under the current bulk and height controls, the reverse may be the case," he said.

Association president Mark Silcocks said Mr Collier did his report pro bono, while aSquare was commissioned.

"It's a very important issue, so sometimes it's worth spending a bit of money to get a professional opinion," Mr Silcocks said.

He said the proposed increase in density would have a "disastrous" impact on the suburb's village character.

The association's petition opposing increased density has been signed by 412 locals.

A council spokeswoman said staff were due to provide a report next month based on more than 70 submissions from residents and a response from Hill PDA.

Staff would then prepare possible scenarios for future development in Double Bay, which would be examined further in a public forum.



Kelly McNamara and fellow business owners (inset from top) Alessandro Masini

Onwards and upwards, say

DOUBLE Bay businesses have thrown their support behind two controversial proposals for six-storey developments on Cross St.

Trenery store manager Sarah Bozic said she would love to see more development to stimulate "foot traffic" for businesses.

Italian Luxury Group owner Alessandro Masini also gave a thumbs up to the plans for 34 units at 20-26 Cross St and 13 at 18 Cross St (the Hunters Arcade).

"The more people who live in Double Bay, the more people will shop," he said.

Hairdresser Sam Monteforte supported the development because he felt it could bring in more passing trade, despite him being in the Hunters Arcade, which would be demolished.

Longevity Lounge Esthetics owner Kelly McNamara believed the development would be good for the suburb.

"I have seen Double Bay

go from a quiet suburb to a bustling one, and we have to maintain it," she said.

Double Bay Commerce Centre owner O'Regan said the development would be good for the suburb and would make it safer and more amenity rich. "The plan in the suburb will also drive amenity side which will pr

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