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## Waverley Council limits retail floor space for Bronte RSL development



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**Posted:**

Thursday, 21 February 2013

Residents protesting the proposed transformation of Bronte RSL Club into a high-rise retail apartment block turned up in large numbers on Tuesday night as Waverley Council approved one of four amendments to the proposal.

At the first Council meeting this year, Liberal Councillor Angela Burrill forwarded a successful motion, reducing retail floor space of the development for the site from 500 to 400 square metres.

The remaining amendments forwarded by Labor and Greens candidates were denied.

Speaking to a jam-packed gallery, Waverley Mayor Sally Betts thanked residents for their contribution.

"It is really important because we are also residents; to get the planning right and to work out what is right for the place in which we live," she said.

“We certainly believe in community consultation and I believe this has delivered community consultation to us.”

Residents are especially concerned about the potential safety hazards for children in the area.

Holding up placards prior to the meeting, Bronte residents voiced further disapproval over potential increased traffic congestion, impact of increased retail competition on existing local businesses and the loss of character in the area.

David Hynes, Director of developer Winston Langley Burlington (WLB) said traffic complaints had been addressed.

“There have been a number of independent consultant reports commissioned by the Council and also submitted by our company. While their methodologies consist between the traffic reports commissioned by council and by WLB, both reports reach the same conclusion: the network can accommodate the traffic from the proposed development,” he said.

“I believe there is a considerable amount of misinformation currently being circulated with regard to the project.”

Addressing Council at the meeting, co-founder of the resident group ‘Save Bronte Village’, Dr Stephen Lightfoot urged Council to listen to the community.

“Will you heed the voices you have heard from your community from the locals, from your constituents and from those who elected you? If not, then you must ask yourselves, who do you represent?” he said.

Disgruntled residents had earlier sent hundreds of emails to councillors, petitioning for provisions to ensure the development was solely residential and limited the development’s height to nine metres.

Council also sought the opinions of residents through surveys and community workshops.

A recent poll by Waverley Council found that 66 per cent of residents did not want more development encouraged at the village centre. 70 per cent did not want Council to consider extending village centre zoning to allow for more shops between the RSL site and existing shops.

“I don’t blame the residents for asking for it. I mean, you ask for what you want. I mean, life’s like that isn’t it?” said Independent Councillor Miriam Guttman-Jones.

Prior to deliberating any amendments, Council heard petitions from relevant stakeholders.

Simon Paterson, secretary of Bronte RSL Club’s sub-branch, highlighted the importance of considering the historical war significance of the club when considering the proposal. He urged Council to facilitate the “best outcome for the community”.

Bronte RSL Club was initially set up as a meeting place for Diggers after WWII.