

NATIONAL NSW

'You wouldn't like a boarding house next to your home': Cromer residents speak out against development

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One Cromer resident was close to tears as she pleaded with the four men before her to reject a small boarding house in her Sydney northern beaches suburb.

At a packed meeting of residents with Warringah's development assessment panel, Lisa Walsh nearly broke down as she said: "You would not like a boarding house next to your home."



Residents protesting a boarding house gather in Cromer. FACEBOOK

There was standing room only at the council chambers on Wednesday night as locals opposed to the affordable housing project of just eight units made a last-ditch effort to have the proposal overturned.

The \$670,000 boarding house would house up to 16 residents under NSW's affordable housing laws, but attracted 800 submissions to the local council objecting to the plan.

The submissions variously referred to boarding house tenants as paedophiles, bums, deviants and drug addicts, and many raised concerns about the safety of children attending the nearby public school.

A dozen residents of about 100 attendees rose to speak on Wednesday night.

Most argued it would be out of character with the area, where the median house price is well over \$1 million.

Many also said they understood affordable housing was important, but they did not think Cromer was the right place for it.

One man, Jason Walsh, described the boarding house as a "glorified motel" and feared its residents would only live there short-term.

"I'm all for affordable housing, but they need to be in the right area and this is not the right area," he said.

Parking, poor public transport access, privacy, noise, swearing, smoking and drinking were also raised as concerns.
location.

Joanne Hood said the street, Grover Avenue, was "remote". It was a 1.6km return trip to the local shops, she said.

Matthew Benson, the town planner working for the developers, Crystal Hut Ptd Ltd, drew jeers and taunts when he rose to speak.

"This is simply housing made available to human beings who will pay some rent," he said.

"The people who will reside in the boarding house are not aliens. They are not perverts. They are people," he said.

The assessment panel, chaired by Kevin Hoffman, said it would publish its decision on whether to approve the development, by mid-next week.

Warringah Council has already recommended approval.

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