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## Collaroy beach: \$100m luxury apartment redevelopment wins court approval

A court decision has been made on the future of a bid to bulldoze a beach backpacker party hostel and replace it with a \$100m luxury apartment complex.



**Jim O'Rourke**

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A local developer has won a lengthy legal battle with bureaucrats to build a \$100 million luxury apartment complex on the northern beaches.

Steve Howell appealed to the Land and Environment Court to overturn Northern Beaches Council's decision to reject his bid to demolish the backpackers hostel at Collaroy — and an adjoining block of flats — and replace them with 34 swish units.



An artist's impression of the "Bathers Collaroy" redevelopment at Collaroy, looking south on Collaroy St. Picture: HCAP Developments

The development application was rejected by the Northern Beaches Local Planning Panel in April, on the recommendation of council officers, even though there were 136 submissions from locals in favour of the complex, made up of two buildings straddling Collaroy and Alexander streets.

Only 16 submissions were received by the council opposed to bulldozing of the 65-room Sydney Beach House hostel and the small block of units.





The unit block in Alexander St, Collaroy, to be demolished to make way for “Bathers Collaroy”. Picture: Google Maps

Mr Howell, as CEO of HCAP Developments, had pitched the four-storey residential complex, named the “Bathers Collaroy”, as a way to help revitalise the Collaroy business precinct. HCAP bought the hostel and the three-storey block of units, with commercial spaces on the ground floor, for \$14.75m in mid-2017.

But council planners said his redevelopment did not fit with the character of the area.



The Sydney Beachhouse backpacker hostel in Collaroy St, Collaroy. Picture: Google Maps.

“While the redevelopment of the site is a positive feature of the development, the bulk and scale of the building has not been successfully resolved and is ultimately considered to be inconsistent with the character and context of the locality,” their assessment report said.

The youth hostel came to notoriety last year, during the early phase of the Covid pandemic, when neighbours complained backpackers were not sticking to social



An artist's impression of the "Bathers Collaroy" redevelopment at Collaroy, looking at the entrance between the two buildings to the communal area and retail space on the Alexander St side of the redevelopment. Picture: HCAP Developments

In April 2020, the Manly Daily reported that police and council rangers visited the hostel after reports guests were holding parties on the terrace.

Locals who praised the Mr Howell's plan said it would bring much-needed parking to the area as well as an increase in customers for local businesses.

Others said they wanted to see the backpacker hostel demolished because it "does not make a positive contribution to the locality".

Those against the redevelopment said it would massively increase local traffic; spoil views of the ocean and; that its rooftop terrace would invade neighbours' privacy.



An artist's impression of the "Bathers Collaroy" redevelopment at Collaroy, looking west on Alexander St. Picture: HCAP Developments

On Wednesday the court granted the appeal and granted development consent.

Mr Howell said he was thrilled at the decision and that the court victory was also a win for the Collaroy community as a whole.

“It’s exciting for the suburb.

“There hasn’t been a development of this size and scale in Collaroy Village for 50 years.”

Resident Ben Adams, who made a submission, said the existing buildings were an “eyesore”.

“I have lived in Collaroy for many years and to be honest it has fallen behind the times. I think some more developments that honour the beach lifestyle but take the area forward in terms of amenities and facilities, will only enhance what is a close-knit beachside community,” Mr Adams said.

Mr Howell described the redevelopment as “generational change happening with overwhelming community support”.



Mr Howell said he expected to start marketing the apartments early in the new year.

“We’ve designed this with feedback from thee locals. I’ve spoken to the directors at the surf club, and the Beach Club, and with locals and asked then ‘what do we need in Collaroy?’.”

As well as 34 large sized luxury 2-, 3- and penthouse apartments across the two buildings, the complex will have a “surf shack” for residents to store surf gear and shower and change after a visit to the nearby beach.

There will also be a gym, sauna, yoga area, games room, communal BBQ area with pizza oven; as well as secure parking and storage for the residents. The development will also make use of the latest “green” technology including electric car charging.

Leading interior design stylists, Coco Republic, have been brought in as consultants on internal design and layouts.

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