

Building Community Support for Community Housing TOOL KIT

Why do some people oppose affordable housing?



CASE STUDY PROMOTING SOCIAL INCLUSION IN A GENTRIFYING LOCAL AREA

In 2014, a private developer successfully completed the development of a 20 room 'New Generation' boarding house in Summer Hill, a suburb in the former Ashfield Council area (now within the Inner West LGA). It is managed to a high standard by Hume Community Housing and their on-site manager.

The SEPPARH Development Application was refused by Ashfield Council, with particular issues raised including compatibility with character of the local area and unacceptable privacy impacts on neighbouring properties. Council had received a number of submissions from neighbours opposed to the proposal. The proponent appealed the decision to the NSW Land and Environment Court (LEC). After a conciliation conference, it was agreed that all of the relevant development standards contained in SEPPARH had been met, with the remaining issue being whether the development was compatible with the character of the local area. A number of neighbouring residents gave evidence at the LEC hearing objecting to the proposal. Their main concerns included bulk and scale, loss of outlook and light, noise, overlooking and privacy impacts, and impact on availability of street parking. The LEC concluded that the development as designed was appropriate in its context and sufficiently compatible with the local character.

Hume Community Housing is proactively managing the property with regular inspections, block meetings and customer wellbeing visits as well as the provision of an on-site manager. Hume Community Housing has not received any complaints or issues from neighbours. Neighbours of the Summer Hill boarding house surveyed reported that the impact of the development had been neutral, that it looked nice and was well looked after - with some previous design concerns met by the developer and that new tenants had so far exhibited 'good neighbour behaviours'.

Boarding house residents are reported to be very satisfied with the quality of the internal design and fit out and standard of management and maintenance. The rent is genuinely affordable to low income working singles and couples. Despite initial opposition raised by neighbours, it appears that quality design and good management matters, with the overall sentiment of neighbours towards the project post-occupancy much improved.



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