

Approval worries residents

TERRY COLLINS

AN application to increase the size of a suburban home at Lisarow by 400 per cent was the subject of lengthy discussion at Gosford Council on Tuesday night.

The council has approved plans for the major expansion of the Lisarow home, despite community fears that the expanded cottage may be intended for use as a function centre by the fundamentalist Christian group Exclusive Brethren.

Councillors approved the Kennard family's application to increase their McDonalds Rd home to four times its size after receiving assurances from the owners that the expanded property would be used for private residential use only.

But nearby residents fear the property is earmarked for use as a function centre and accommodation base for the 650-seat auditorium the Exclusive Brethren are expected to seek approval to build close to the Kennard home.

The Kennards are known to have links with the Exclusive Brethren, and to be associated with the trust group which owns the nearby land.

Residents Against Inappropriate Development spokesman Stan Crellin said he was concerned that if the group was to establish a function centre nearby it could gain leverage in applying for approval to build the larger church.

"Although the zoning for the



Stan Crellin, Jill Maclean and Val Heathcote discuss the approved plans.

Picture: PETER CLARK

area is expected to be changed later this year to ban such large meeting halls, the concern is that approval of this house renovation will help the Brethren establish existing usage," he said. Residents

Jill Maclean and Val Heathcote fear approval of a large auditorium would change the character of the street. Concerns included parking and safety issues and house values.

Private use key factor

GOSFORD Deputy Mayor Craig Doyle spoke in favour of the approval.

He said councillors were obliged to judge the application as it was presented and accept the undertaking of the owner that it was intended only for private use.

Recording a lone vote against approval, Cr Terri Latella warned that if the expanded building was to be used as anything other than a private residence in the future, residents would have recourse to object through the council.

The applicant declined the opportunity to make a comment to the *Express-Advocate*.

"We are just family people," he said.

"We leave the decisions to the wisdom of councillors."



Craig Doyle.



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