

‘Last resistance’ holds out Woolies

Supermarket plans thwarted as owners stand firm

Matt Taylor



SUPERMARKET giant Woolworths has been thwarted in its attempts to complete a secret three-year property buy-up in Mosman town centre as the “last resistance” turn down offers.

The community-backed Mosman Club says it has been contacted by Woolworths’ management over the past year, but it stresses: “We’re not in a position to enter into talks with a third party on a potential sale under the Registered Clubs Act”.

And now, the owner of the nearby Westpac site has revealed he was approached by a “party” for Woolies to offload his property about 18 months ago.

“I just simply indicated to them that we weren’t enthusiastic about having a Woolworths in the (town centre) frontage in Mosman,” said Seph Glew, who owns 743 Military Rd. “We just didn’t think it was the right solution. And we still feel same the way. I think we should be maintaining a village feel for Mosman.”

The latest revelations come after the *Daily* exclusively revealed last month that Woolies was planning a large-scale mixed-use development in Mosman which could see a multi-level carpark, retail, residential and potentially a new RSL club change the face of the sleepy suburb.

An investigation by the *Daily* uncovered Woolies’ plans which have included a

complex web of property buy-ups around the Mosman Club since 2015 and continued approaches to remaining land owners around the intersection of Military Rd and Gouldsbury St.

Documents revealed the Mosman Club Community Project Pty Ltd — which the RSL denies any links to — has since spent more than \$18 million on six properties in the same block on Military Rd.

Mr Glew said he had been aware of Woolies' Mosman plans "for a couple of years".

"They had that party talk to us at one stage, but if we put a big Woolies here, we're just going to end up like everywhere else, aren't we?" the BlackWall real estate company director said.

Asked how much it would take for him to seriously consider selling his property, he said: "It would have to be in the stratosphere."

Would it be more than \$4.6 million, which is what the Mosman Club Community Project paid for 717 Military Rd, where Flight Centre is located, on October 12, 2015?

"I don't want to give them a target," Mr Glew said.

"Am I part of the last resistance? I just think we happen to be in a position where, if we can use our influence to get a better outcome, then we will."

Woolies has confirmed it is looking at building a new store in Mosman.

"We believe that there is an under-supply of supermarkets in Mosman," a company spokeswoman said.

If we put a big Woolies here, we're just going to end up like everywhere else, aren't we?
Seph Glew