

# Soda approval a corker for GDL

Matthew Cranston

The \$80 million apartment project in South Brisbane that sold all its stock off the plan before having its development application knocked back by the local council has won the right to have the project approved.

Since being knocked back, the developer GDL Group has made a small political donation to the LNP although all involved deny the donation had any effect on the eventual outcome of the application.

GDL has also made some minor changes to its original application for the development known as Soda.

In February Brisbane City Council sent a detailed five-page rejection letter in response to GDL's application for the 20-storey tower.

The rejection raised dozens of reasons why the development at 27 Cordelia Street was refused, including insufficient car parks, a need for a change in the site cover ratio, insufficient ventilation and not being in keeping with the neighbourhood plan.

"The proposed building appears as an overly bulky building mass out of scale with the locality," the council's senior urban planner said in the refusal letter.

GDL Group took the council to the planning and environment court in March to appeal the council's decision.

According to court documents, the case was originally scheduled to be heard for three days in June, but those dates were vacated.

After the vacation of the trial the parties negotiated out of court and the council accepted some changes to the application. Those changes were satisfactory to both parties and the presiding judge then ordered that the application be approved.

GDL Group general manager **Viktor Bodnar** told *The Australian Financial Review* the changes include: introducing communal herb gardens on the podium level; a residents-only gym; the opportunity for the council to promote local art on the Cordelia Street facade; greater activation of the facade; and a "marginal shift" of the tower section towards Fish Lane to allow for a greater setback from the western site neighbour.

"We are pleased to have been able to work with BCC to deliver a product that I am sure will exceed our buyers' expectations," Mr Bodnar said.

The units, priced between \$340,000 and \$1.65 million, include a 3.5-year sunset clause.