

\$300m development to transform CBD side of the river

Yarra's true north

JOHN MASANAUSKAS

A COMPLEX with a striking glass facade and gold fins will star in a \$300 million redevelopment of the north bank of the Yarra River.

After years of delays, final plans for the Northbank project, near the intersection of Flinders St and Wurundjeri Way, have been submitted.

The development will include a hotel, apartments, a park and an events space.

And it will bring about the restoration of a goods shed and crane that are part of Melbourne's maritime history.

The site, behind the historic Mission to Seafarers building, was bought from the state government. The finished development will provide the missing link between the north bank and Docklands.

Developer Riverlee has proposed a multistorey 180-room hotel and 250-unit complex with "a striking glass facade accented by gold glass fins".

Architect Karl Fender, whose firm, Fender Katsalidis, designed Eureka Tower, said: "The new building will 'float'

above the heritage shed in a series of curvaceous, light and airy layers, in a way that's inspired by the curves of the river and its tidal flows."

The restored shed will include the hotel lobby, have shops and restaurants, and be used for events that Riverlee envisages will enliven the waterfront by day and night.

Riverlee, owned by Malaysian-Australian businessman Clement Lee, also redeveloped the adjacent World Trade Centre and WTC Wharf sites.

Lord Mayor Robert Doyle said it was exciting that the decrepit shed would be restored and its history acknowledged.

"It's great to see the north bank catching up to the south

bank and becoming a really vibrant part of the city," he said. "It's been very shortsighted to turn our backs on our river. "Great cities don't do that."

The state Planning Department will now consider the Northbank blueprint.
john.masanauskas@news.com.au
@JMasanauskas

An artist's impression of the Northbank development (main), and (inset, right) how the area looks today.

