

APARTMENTS

Factory inspires chic design

BY CHRIS VEDELAGO

Building a 430-apartment complex in the heart of Richmond's residential district doesn't sound subtle.

But subtlety and sympathy with the area's existing streetscapes is precisely what renowned architect Karl Fender of Fender Katsalidis has sought to achieve with Jaques Richmond.

The development sits on a one-hectare "island" site bounded by Hightet, Griffiths, Palmer and Coppin streets, just a stone's throw north of the bustle of Bridge Road.

It was long home to the Jaques Factory, which manufactured rock-crushing equipment, a property well known to locals as much for the distinctive red-brick walls encircling it as the heavy machinery still located on-site from when the plant closed 16 years ago.

But when Fender was brought in to design Jaques Richmond on behalf of the Riverside Group and Macquarie Real Estate Equity Funds, it would be those ageing walls that provided inspiration for the \$290 million development that would follow.

"We don't have a lot of history here so it's worth retaining what we can," Fender says. "It would be very easy to construct something that might look like a spaceship landed here, but that would fight the character of the streets."

Despite the lack of heritage



The new Jaques Richmond development reflects the area's heritage.

protection – the original wall is from 1885 – the developer agreed to not only preserve what was left, but to rebuild much of the missing half.

"You don't keep walls cheaply, so it was a big decision. It was retained as a monument to what stood on the site for many, many years," he says.

Avoiding the "spaceship" aesthetic also involved setting back the residential buildings that held many of the 430 apartments, giving the building a "pedestrian scale" from the street in front.

"The wall is the base that scales the development. If you walk along the red wall you have no idea what is above the parapet," Fender says.

The architect used glass, copper, timber and coloured concrete to continue that sympathetic design to

the two modern buildings and courtyard above.

The design has proven popular with buyers, particularly owner-occupiers who have taken up about 70 per cent of the stock sold to date. The 109 apartments in stage one, due to finish construction in August, are sold out. The second stage of 229 apartments attracted more than \$30 million worth of sales since being put to market at the start of June.

The site's history as an industrial relic will also be reflected in the decorations of the common area, which will feature some of the former heavy machinery used to crush rock.

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