

The art of creating new soul

Erica Fosbender

ART is making its way out of galleries and into homes throughout Melbourne — and it is not just hanging on walls.

Developers are making art — on facades, gardens and interiors — a focal point of housing projects across the city.

They believe it not only makes property more appealing but also helps with capital growth.

Football larrikin Sam Newman may have been ahead of his time when he put a glass mural of former *Baywatch* star Pamela Anderson on the front of his St Kilda West house in 2000.

Across Melbourne, new developments are springing up with art in their soul.

The 2 Girls Building in Abbotsford includes a digi-glass facade with a striking image of two girls across the front of the building.

Artist Robert Owen was brought in to work on the Triptych development in Southbank, designing its facade, terrace screens and the front gates of the 157 apartments.

Paul Hameister, joint managing director of Hamton, the developer behind the Eden and Haven projects in Abbotsford, said he believes art adds to the value of a property.

"We always allow a budget for art in the delivery of each project as we believe it is very important," he said.

Mr Hameister said Hamton wanted to create something for the new and existing community.

The developer has commissioned three installations as part of the Yarra City Council's public art strategy for Acacia Place, which links the Eden and Haven developments.

"Public and private art are important features of making great places," Mr Hameister said.

"We believe art is good for the soul, ideally beautiful for the eye and sometimes challenging for the mind.

"We also believe it's good for capital growth."

Multimedia installation artist Priscilla Bracks has been commissioned for the first major artwork — *The Acacia Place Light Wall* — and the public can vote on other works in a competition.

"We were looking for sculptures that appeal to a wide demographic of residents and the public," said project curator Andy Dinan, of Mars Gallery.

"They need to be innovative and exciting while being able to stand the test of time and reflect the natural, tranquil setting of the bushland surrounds of the development."

The 11 shortlisted works are on show in the Haven display at 679 Victoria St, Abbotsford, and the winners will be announced later this year.

Art-House is an aptly named development on the site of an old double-fronted shop at 54-56 Chapel St, St Kilda.

The site had been derelict but was recently converted into an art gallery — including a mural across its front paying tribute to the past.

Justin Architecture's Elisa



Thinking outside the box: Eric Yang at the Art on the Park building.

Justin followed the local bohemian style with a design that celebrates the past.

Art-House will be a boutique development of 12 apartments with a seven-star energy rating.

Ms Justin said the street-front mural helped the development contribute to the character of the area.

"Overall the art imbues the project with a cultural layer that can only be a long-term benefit to society," she said.

The front part of the development is a display suite where buyers and the public can view the plans for the development of the site.

"In most cases a development will rise from a site without acknowledging the past," Ms Justin said.

"This site had an interesting story and the artists were able to interpret this in a creative way without losing the integrity of the space."