



# Inner-city living sanctuary

**DEBRA BELA**

More locals are looking to the inner city for a lifestyle change, if apartment sales are anything to go by. Inner-city apartments have recorded stronger sales growth in the March quarter of 2020 than the same period last year, with \$57 million worth of unconditional sales. The statistics are part of the Place Projects Inner City Apartment Report and represent 93 properties in the inner city. In the same period last year, as Australia headed into a federal election, only 64 unconditional sales were recorded, worth

\$43 million.

"Brisbane is a fantastic place to live. You've got Kingsford Smith Drive, Queens Wharf, South Brisbane," Place Projects' David Kortlang said. "Those whole inner-city precincts are being revitalised and people are making the move from the suburbs to the city for that great lifestyle."

He said Australians have been educated about the value of good design and quality fixtures and finishes through lifestyle programs

Isuch as *The Block*, which premieres its 16th season on Channel 9 tomorrow night, and developers have responded.

"For many years we've had some very cookie-cutter, mediocre designs in the apartment market," Mr Kortlang said.

"A lot of the stock from 2004 onwards, when the big boom in investment apartments happened, thousands of them were built and frankly it gave the industry a bad name. No stories, no design, no quality of life, just boxy



living. That's all gone now and clever developers have moved in."

Homeowners who appreciate stately homes and a lively community feel have been attracted to the new inner-city development of Silk Ascot on Racecourse Rd, from Geocal and Guavalime and Loucas and Zahos Architects.

The mixed-use building with retail, commercial and 12 residential apartments will play a lead role in the rejuvenation of the historic Racecourse Rd precinct that connects

the Brisbane River to Eagle Farm Racecourse.

The development had one unconditional sale in its first two weeks on market and only six apartments are still available, including two penthouses.

"We built on the fact that Racecourse Road had a long history of having a village atmosphere and it was important for the building to have a mix of retail and office space as well as the residential focus. Yet we clearly separate the functions with two separate lobbies and two separate lifts," said architect Con Zahos.

The apartments are designed for the Queensland climate and most have a northern aspect. There is no central lift core, and apartments are accessed via open breezeways flanked by green walls, traditional brickwork and large voids with raw concrete finishes.

"We wanted to create a statement here," Mr Zahos said. "There have been a lot of other streets in Brisbane that have had rejuvenation

so we saw this as an important building to start that process in Ascot."

Silk Ascot is part of a renaissance of architecture designed to appeal to local downsizers who are embracing inner-city apartment living.

"I think apartment living is here to stay and it's becoming more the norm as we try to limit urban sprawl," Mr Zahos said.

Mr Kortlang said inner-city residents could be broken down into three broad categories.

"First there's the single person or the young working couple who want a stylish one-bedroom apartment as close to the city as possible," he said. "Young families are attracted to apartments in West End and around the RNA precinct where new schools are being built. You are going to see a wave of product designed to cater to these young families. And third, you have the older design-conscious person who wants to move into the city for the lifestyle with a trophy property to show off to their friends."



Only six apartments remain in Silk Ascot in Brisbane's stately inner suburb of Ascot

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