

Up front can make a big difference

■ Angie Tomlinson

Street appeal matters as much for apartment complexes as single homes, with a facade potentially affecting initial sales through to resale value.

With plenty of choice in the current Perth apartment market, it can be a complex's facade that sets it apart.

"We believe first impressions are incredibly important and when potential property owners respond to a property's facade it is hard for them to forget it," Match parent company M/Group managing director Lloyd Clark said.

"Creating a compelling facade is about setting the scene for the rest of the environment. Match deliberately makes particularly strong and bold statements with its developments because we believe it adds depth to each project and the market responds extremely well to this approach.

"A stunning facade sets the tone and expectation for beautiful and complementary interiors. The combination adds value to the properties and increases capital potential."

According to Georgiou Developments executive director Jon Smeulders, an apartment complex needs to pay attention to its surroundings and provide a sense of identity.

"The facade, lobbies, walkways, entrances and internal design of apartments should tell a story as you walk into the building, and should all reflect the quality of the development to provide a buyer with continuous good impression from the street through to the inside of their apartment," he said.

A unique facade does not necessarily mean higher apartment prices, whether prices are kept down simply with clever design or passed on in better resale value.

"Good facade design that can pique the interest of buyers



Match's planned M24 complex in Leederville.

doesn't necessarily need to cost that much more and, at its best, will be not only visually appealing but also benefit the functionality of the building, and the use of the spaces within and near it," Perth architect and developer Barry Baltinas said.

"In a market where buyers are spoilt for choice the overall look of a complex can definitely set a development apart and not just for owner-occupiers but also investors who know it adds to the leasing and resale potential of an apartment," he said.

Baltinas Made's latest development, Camilla Residences on Mount Street in West Perth, includes a one-of-a-kind facade where the space between the apartment balconies features a vertical bronze metallic screen that moves with the breeze.

Mr Clark said in the case of Match's heritage work, including the restoration of Heirloom in Fremantle, the cost of restoring heritage fabric might be higher but the inherent value of securing a unique and limited piece of history that cannot be emulated or duplicated was priceless.

"This inherent value is passed on through resale and will never date," he said.

Blackburne managing director Paul Blackburne said a unique facade distinguished a complex from other buildings, helping sales, rental and capital growth.

"There is a wider choice so people select the projects that have invested in good design," Mr Blackburne said.

Psaros design director Justin Hatch said while it was essential a facade was aesthetically appealing, liveability was most important to buyers.

"The look and feel of a development are critical for resale and the facade plays a major role," he said.

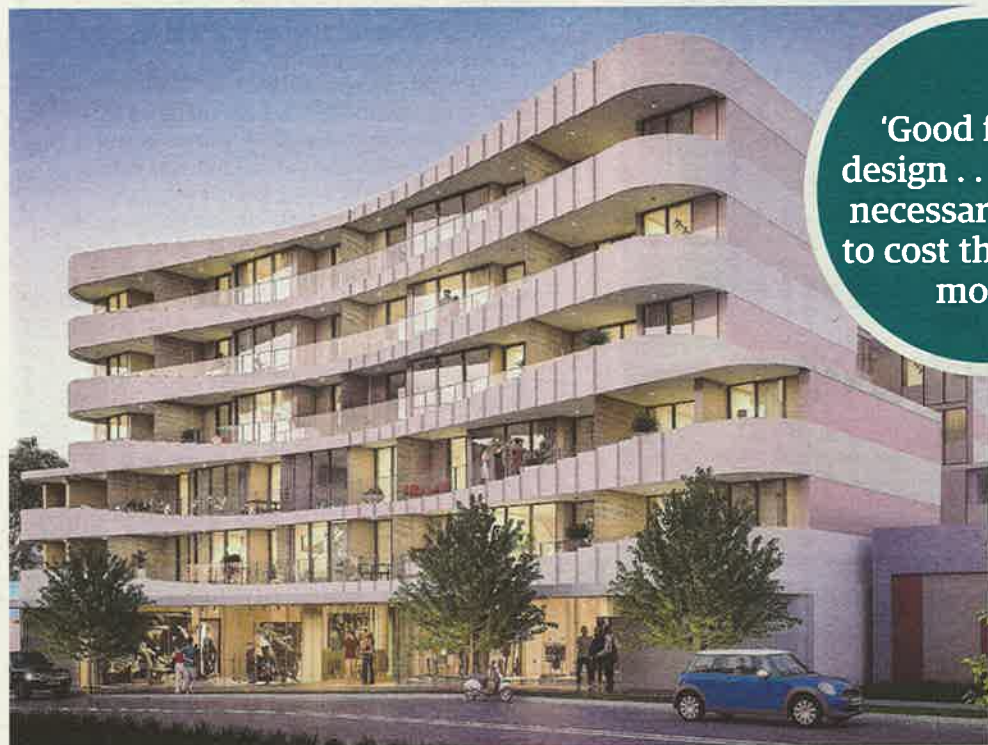
'Good facade design . . . doesn't necessarily need to cost that much more.'



The vision for Baltinas Made's Camilla Residences on Mount Street in West Perth.

"However, facade is one element and other key factors need to be taken into account such as location, developer and builder reputation.

"And an element which is key factor for our company — sustainability — a futureproofed development will achieve higher resale value."



Georgiou Developments' Vita complex.