

MEDIA RELEASE

Yungaba House begins a new chapter in history

Restoration pays tribute to a colourful past

Brisbane – 1 June 2017 – YUNGABA House at Kangaroo Point stands as a lasting tribute to 130 years of Brisbane’s living history.

And now the team at Frasers Property Australia, Arqus Design and Hutchinson Builders can rightly claim their part in that history as The Residences Yungaba House are finally unveiled following an extensive restoration program more than a decade in the making.

In that time, Scott Peabody, the director of Arqus Design, has designed the project in line with Frasers Property Australia’s vision for the historic site that was acquired in 2003.

The masterplan has always centred on the historical significance of Yungaba House as Frasers Property progressed plans to create three new apartment buildings on the site. The low-rise apartment buildings, named Linc, Promontory and Affinity, are set against the heritage-listed gardens that define the historic riverfront site below the Storey Bridge at Kangaroo Point.

There is no denying that Yungaba House remains the dominant landmark in one of the oldest residential precincts of Brisbane.

“From the outset, Yungaba House was perceived as the jewel in the crown,” said Mr Peabody, recalling his design journey for The Residences.

“That meant preserving the view corridor, and the heritage width of Yungaba House was paramount. Everything else almost became secondary”.

“We didn’t want to impact the architectural qualities of this wonderful building in any way, and I am proud to say we have achieved that. It has a wonderful history and an amazing fabric.”

The history of Yungaba House dates to 1887 when it was first established as an immigration centre. In later years, it was used as a temporary refuge for destitute soldiers returning from the Boer War.

In the 1930s it became an accommodation centre for workers building the new Story Bridge, as well as a design studio for bridge engineer John Bradfield, and later as a hospital in World War II.

Mr Peabody described this rich history in detail, reflecting on the inspiration it offered his very own Bradfield moments.

“Each of The Residences has been designed to reflect parts of this history, and each home has its story to tell,” he said.

“This is not an apartment building. It is 10 residences, each with its own identity and its own front door. That takes a distinct mindset to bring together.

“It was never about shoehorning 10 apartments into a heritage building. The way we approached the internal subdivision was to be very mindful of its former uses and to reflect this in the design and how that interfaced with modern living spaces.

“Then it was a matter of celebrating those heritage qualities in every single house. The Bradfield Residence, for example, was part of the male dormitory and we designed it in a way that celebrates the sky lights that filtered into Bradfield’s drawing studio.

“What we have produced is 10 luxury homes of equal quality even though the character of each house varies. There are rooms that have a different feel simply because of the heritage fabric.

“I believe we have successfully balanced the expression of that fabric and the original heritage character of the building with the creation of a suite of high-end residences with expectations that are right up there by today’s standards.”

The Residences’ project manager Christopher Chainey, of Hutchinson Builders, spent more than a decade in the UK restoring historic buildings and converting them into modern living spaces.

He described The Residences as the finest project he has undertaken since relocating to Australia 17 years ago.

“Rescuing this historic building from what was a very derelict state and bringing it back to its former glory over a very limited timeframe has been a great achievement,” said Mr Chainey.

Construction took just 12 months and drew on Hutchinson’s extensive database of skilled trades in the field of restoration.

“With any project of this type and scale, it’s essential that we work as a complete team with the developer and the designer because everyone has to be on the same page.” said Mr Chainey.

“That ultimately defined the success of this project and what was achieved in that time.” The proximity of the Story Bridge made acoustics a major priority for Hutchinson Builders.

“All windows were replaced with specialised acoustic glass, together with high-end door seals and window seals,” said Mr Chainey.

“Internally, partition walls and floors have also been designed with acoustics that is well above minimum requirements.”

Hutchinson’s brought in a team of specialist trades from Tasmania to restore 135 windows at Yungaba House, replacing 400 pieces of glass in total.

The restoration required the removal of beads and sashes, which had to be individually catalogued and labelled. On refitting, each window was balanced and reweighted with extra lead as needed to ensure smooth operation.

“A project of this scale needed this degree of attention to detail to bring the historic building to its capacity as a modern living space,” said Mr Chainey.

Frasers Property Australia’s General Manager Residential Queensland Cameron Leggatt described The Residences as a fitting end to the Yungaba House master plan.

“The opportunity to bring this historic property back to life has been rewarding for the entire project team,” Mr Leggatt said.

“Our vision for Yungaba House has been clear from the very beginning. This was an opportunity to restore one of Brisbane’s oldest buildings while preserving its historical integrity.

“The work undertaken from the design right through to the construction has delivered a suite of world-class residences that will keep that history alive for generations to come.”

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