



# BUILDING

Owner-led developments are taking off, delivering homeowners new digs and big profits, reports **Kim Macdonald**

The owners of ageing townhouses in South Perth have used a revolutionary development model to build their dream homes, make millions in profit and keep their killer views — for \$40,000 each.

The owners recently formed a development company to bulldoze their 11 townhouses on Parker Street and to build a twelve-storey tower with 23 apartments in its place.

Each owner will get a new, custom-designed luxury apartment, with pre-sales from the remaining 13 dwellings to pay for construction.

Each upcoming apartment in the \$90 million development will be worth between \$2 million to \$10.5 million — well above the townhouses' current values, which range from \$900,000 to \$1.9 million.

It is a massive windfall for the owners, many of whom were facing six-figure maintenance bills to fix sloping roofs, dodgy escape stairs, slipped retaining walls, clunky amenities and cracked paving on their 1970s-style homes. To pull off the stunning transformation, the group contacted award-winning architect John Colliere, from Claremont's Colliere Architecture, who specialises in luxury riverfront residential developments.

"They had been approached by a

number of developers wanting to get hold of their land in the past, but under this model, the profits that would have gone to a developer have remained with the owners," Mr Colliere said.

Mr Colliere interviewed every person in the syndicate to figure out how to best accommodate their needs. Their answers guided the design of everything from the depth of the pool to the width of the doors.

"I sat down for months and analysed the brief of each individual, and came up with a strategy," he said. "It's been fantastic. I think it's the way of the future."

The design includes modifications in some apartments for families who wanted separate living areas to accommodate visiting parents or children.

Another older resident wanted extra wide doors to eventually allow for a wheelchair and a lift size that would be big enough to fit a stretcher. Mr Colliere designed this apartment with two separately keyed entrances to eventually accommodate a live-in carer.

Mr Colliere ensured all the apartments were able to take advantage of natural cross-flow ventilation, in keeping with the request of one person who did not like air-conditioning.

He also ensured each apartment had its own separate hot water and air-conditioning systems so those who used little — including a couple who travelled for extended periods — were not unfairly slugged under an all-in system.

Several of the owners told him they

**Under this model, the profits that would have gone to a developer have remained with the owners.**

Architect John Colliere, pictured left with redevelopment partners Orna and Geoffrey Shulman outside the townhouses.



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# ON AN OLD DREAM



enjoyed water aerobics, so Mr Colliere ensured the 25m pool was designed to a constant 1150cm depth, which is minimum depth required for the sport.

Mr Colliere put only two apartments on each floor, ensured ample 10sqm of garage-based storage space and allowed two to five car bays per apartment.

Under the guidance of the owners, he also paid special attention to acoustics, the size of service areas, and other issues that are sometimes overlooked in developer-led designs.

Mr Colliere worked with a professional property valuer to match each owner's proportion of ownership in the existing townhouses with an apartment in the upcoming tower.

"I comfortably work in a development-led economy but I'm very socially conscious, and I jumped at the opportunity to

work with a syndicate of owners again," he said.

"It meant I was able to give profit that normally would have gone to a developer to the original owners."

Mr Colliere put much of the success of the project down to some pivotal drivers in the group, such as key client Joe Muscara.

"I'd suggest that unless you had somebody like that within a strata group it would be very difficult to do such a project."

Once the design was in place, the group bought in project manager Phillip Gnech from Builtform Projects to take care of the application process, as well as legal, strata, taxation and construction issues.

He is in talks with builders, with construction due to start in 2020.

One of the first steps is to combine their land into one 2453sqm block with a 38.9m

river frontage. Mr Gnech said the owners put in \$40,000 each to cover the application.

The rest is coming from bank funding, with their land used as the equity.

"Most will end up with apartments worth \$4 million, but as with all commercial developments, it comes with some risk," he said.

Townhouse owners Orna and Geoffrey Shulman said they were thrilled to swap their ageing three-bedroom townhouse for a flash new apartment.

They bought the townhouse a decade ago and planned to retire into it, but had not realised they would face such a costly maintenance bill.

They will swap it for a luxury apartment on the seventh-floor of the building.

While it will have the same number of bedrooms, the internal living area would be more than twice the size.

They had put in \$40,000 but were set to make millions in capital gains once they get their new apartment.

"We are so thankful for everything," Mrs Shulman said.

"We get all the benefit of this development for having done very, very little," she said.



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