

NEW HOMES
LORNA EDWARDS




It takes a village

The award-winning team behind Garden House in Carlton unveils its upmarket Elwood offering.

The quiet, sophisticated suburb of Elwood is so near and yet so far from its flashy exuberant neighbour, St Kilda. Elwood Village along Ormond Road is predominantly a local's enclave of quirky and upmarket shops, cafes and restaurants catering to the affluent residents of the beachside suburb only eight kilometres from the city centre. Developer Michael Piccolo knows the neighbourhood well – he lived in Elwood for a decade and still shops there every weekend – and now plans to transform the corner site of the former RSL club on Ormond Road and Pine Avenue into a high-end development of 31 apartments with three retail spaces fronting the village. “Having lived in the area for a

while I understand that opportunities like this are fairly rare with the location itself being on the doorstep of the village and the beach only 300 metres the other way,” Piccolo says. For the new project, Piccolo has assembled the same team of architects, Woods Bagot, and interior designers, Hecker Guthrie, behind his acclaimed Garden House apartments in Carlton that garnered six industry awards. Despite keeping the project under wraps and releasing no images until now, Piccolo has been swamped by more than 500 registrations of interest, mainly from well-heeled empty-nesters and young, professional couples from other bayside suburbs. Striking features of the project's exposed concrete façade include



feature panels of handmade bricks imported from Denmark and rows of greenery, with in-built irrigation, adorning every terrace. The design team has spent six months perfecting a full-scale prototype two-bedroom apartment as the display suite. “The owner-occupier market needs to see it, touch it and feel it to appreciate the quality of the design otherwise they are reluctant to buy off-the-plan,” Piccolo says. There are six three-bedroom apartments sized from 130 to 170 square metres internally, 18 two-bedroom apartments ranging from 100 to 115 square metres and seven one-bedroom apartments sized from 50 to 80 square metres. Generous balconies range in size from 25 to 130 square metres. All but the one-bedroom apartments come with two car spaces that will have power points catering to electric cars. Prices are yet to be confirmed but the one-bedroom apartments are around the \$750,000 mark, two-bedroom apartments are \$1.5 million and three bedrooms are \$2.5 million. The large kitchens feature Gaggenau appliances, a grey marble stone island bench, a double pantry with an in-built stone shelf and power points for appliances and room for a double fridge. Weathered brass is a theme throughout the interiors from door handles to the commercial-grade rangehood and the custom-made taps by Brodware in the kitchens and bathrooms. Grey Aether natural stone floors feature throughout the apartments and terraces. The display suite at 2 Pine Avenue, Elwood, is open by appointment, phone 0425 702 574.

Artist impressions of the Elwood House development of 31 apartments, on the site of the former RSL club in Elwood, with the village itself and the beach nearby. The developer has been “swamped” with registrations of interest.



Locals Jane and Geoff Lindsay run Dandelion restaurant.

Hidden gem

The young, upwardly mobile locals of Elwood are an active lot, says acclaimed Melbourne chef Geoff Lindsay, who runs his popular Vietnamese-inspired restaurant Dandelion on Ormond Road with his partner Jane. “Everybody is always out on the street going to the gym or going out for coffee and they are out and about early in the morning,” he says. Renowned for its caramelised pork hock and divine Peking duck and tuna tartare rice paper rolls, his restaurant blends in with the stylish restaurants, cafes and shops in Elwood village. The established large houses in the area and lack of multi-national stores and supermarkets on Ormond Road gives the suburb a traditional charm with old-fashioned butcher and greengrocer shops. “It’s a very unique suburb that is a bit of a hidden gem, really, with a nice village atmosphere along the street and it’s close to the beach,” Lindsay says.