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New angle on design

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with its shading system and lighting control mechanism, highlights how art and function can be melded.

"If you can stitch these two things together properly, you can generate value on both sides of the equation," Brady says.

The project has been four years in the making.

"It's a job that's incredibly close to co-director Dirk (Zimmermann) and my hearts. As an artwork, it has no purpose other than imagination and identity, but it also makes a cultural space and, ultimately, there's the idea of dragging people into the shopping centre," he says.

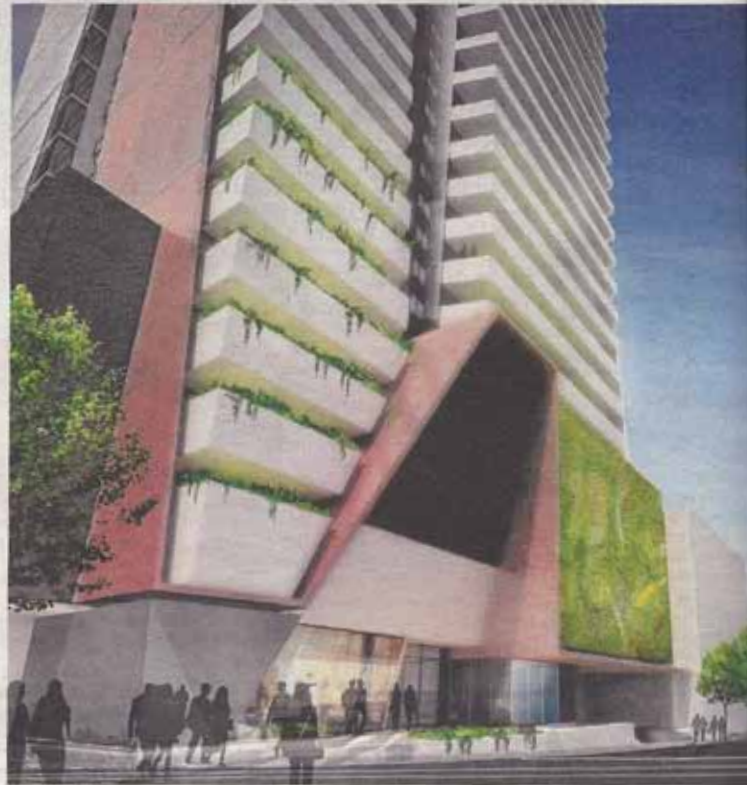
The facade is being built in China by Australian-based Urban Art Projects.

Also in Brisbane, Melbourne-based architect Rothelowman and Brisbane's Whitearchitecture merged to become Rothelowman White last month and it is working on a yet-to-be-approved apartment tower for South Bank.

The practice has 75 staff in Melbourne and a team of seven in its Brisbane studio at West End.

Managing principal Shane Rothe said the firm was designing Brisbane-based ARIA Property Group's new 30-floor, 300-apartment tower on Edmondstone Street.

"Brisbane is looking for refreshed



An artist's impression of the new residential tower on Edmondstone street in Brisbane

ideas, and this building is the first cab off the rank," Rothe says.

"It's something fresh and new and we have great confidence that our set-up in Brisbane will expand our business."

Rothe says of the decision to expand: "Brisbane ticked all the boxes. There's still good population growth, houses are suppressed, demand is good, there's an undersupply of hotel rooms and commercial offices are still very strong because of the resources sector."

In another Melbourne-Brisbane tie-up, Brisbane-based Mode Design and Melbourne's Morris Partnership merged in September.

It's the seventh studio for Mode Design, which also has Queensland offices on the Sunshine and Gold coasts and will create a firm of almost 100 staff.

"The expansion into Victoria has been a long time coming, as we have had clients in key industries in the re-

gion for many years," says managing director Rhonan O'Brien.

Despite a handful of big projects, confidence and sentiment continues to be tough.

The Property Council of Australia's Queensland executive director, Kathy Mac Dermott, says the greatest challenges are barriers to investment such as planning legislation, red tape, development assessment processes, property taxes and infrastructure planning.

"To turn this sentiment around, we need more certainty in planning, as well as greater competition among councils to attract investment and development." She says Townsville has been a standout: "It has eliminated infrastructure charges in the core CBD as a way of attracting investment."

Queensland's Major Projects Office, established in April, also has helped streamline the development assessment of six large-scale developments.

"It has become clear that the property sector is the critical conduit that

'It has no purpose other than imagination and identity and, ultimately, there's the idea of dragging people into the shopping centre'

DYLAN BRADY
STUDIOS/65



An artist's impression of the Wintergarden project

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