

Edited by CATHY SAUNDERS

Artists add flavour to Subi

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Painters, sculptors, architects, poets and other creative types will work in big-window studios on show for visitors to a new \$200 million Subi Centro residential and commercial quarter that has been given the nod by the Subiaco Redevelopment Authority.

The artists-in-residence program will be the innovative addition to a mix of residences, green offices, boutique supermarket and cafe/wine bar.

Postgraduate students and visiting national and international academics will live and work in customised home studios and visitors will be able to see public displays of their work.

Australasian Property Investments (API) has received planning approval to redevelop the one-hectare Arcus Refrigeration site in Roydhouse Street, between Home Base Westley and the Station Street markets.

It will be known as the Arcus Quarter, turning the former light industrial area into a new sector of Subi Centro. API bought the Arcus Refrigeration site in late 2007 and then acquired two adjoining sites in early 2008, paying a total of \$30 million.

The artists-in-residence program is API's way of meeting its requirement to provide the equivalent of one per cent of the construction cost for public art.

API director Adam Zorzi said they wanted to think laterally because the required percentage of the total development cost of \$80 million to \$90 million would be significant.

"We didn't want to spend \$800,000 or \$900,000 just on statues," he said. "It is a lot of money for one project to plunk in one location."

Instead, API will put the cash into a



Work on display: The Arcus Quarter in Roydhouse Street will have an artists-in-residence program in shopfront-style studios in Subi Centro.

foundation to subsidise artists to live and work in artisan studios for stints of about three months as a way of bringing vitality and activity to the quarter.

"We wanted to do something different. I get a little bit frustrated, as a younger Perth person, with Perth's cookie-cutter approach to development," Mr Zorzi said.

"We thought having people sitting and working in the precinct would bring a bit more culture to the area and help in activating the streets.

"The design studios will be on the

ground floor facing to the road, with a 5m-high glass frontage with a work-space area on the ground floor and a mezzanine loft-style living area."

The University of Western Australia has given in-principle support to the artists proposal.

Several changes have been made to the initial design of Arcus Quarter, resulting in fewer residences and a slightly lower-rise development, following feedback from the public, Subiaco City Council and the SRA.

There will be five buildings between three and five storeys in height

and a new public pathway, which will offer better access to the station.

The development includes a 9300sqm A-grade office building with 2000sqm floor plates and a ground floor, 600sqm retail market-style outlet selling fresh produce. The office space will be leased.

One the other side of the internal street will be a "sculptural pavilion" deemed the architectural centrepiece of the project, which will have a cafe and wine bar on the ground floor.

Behind it will sit the artists' studios surrounded by a large courtyard with

public art displays. To the left of the pavilion will be the main apartment building. Behind it will be the townhouse development. In all, there will be 86 residential units ranging from one bedroom apartments through to three-storey townhouses.

The project also includes strata offices, ranging from 80sqm to 130sqm, and home offices, with office space of 120sqm on the ground floor and mezzanine living above.

SRA chief executive Tony Morgan

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said the project embraced the SRA's principles, including transit-oriented development, connectivity, community building, places for people, sustainability and high-quality architecture.

"Planning for people, not just buildings, is an important part of modern urban planning and with almost 30 per cent of the site at ground level, a lot of thought has gone into creating spaces for events and activities," he said.

UWA dean of architecture, landscape and visual arts, Dr Clarissa Ball, said the artists-in-residence foundation would create an environment in which the creative community played an integral and vital role.

"A program such as this would help establish a stimulating environment in which there is greater integration between artists and the wider community," Dr Ball said.

Arcus Quarter was designed by urban

designers and planners Roberts Day and Melbourne architectural firm NH Architecture, led by Perth-trained architects Roger Nelson and Ben Puddy.

Mr Zorzi said API's aim was to build on Subi Centro's profile as a leading urban regeneration project.

"We think the collaborative style, built-form quality and community building initiatives have broader application to a number of potential redevelopment sites through Perth," he said.

They are in line with the State Government's new Spatial Framework and Activities Centres Policy that is encouraging higher density, mixed-use projects in strategic locations around established centres and transport.

Pre-sales for the offices will start shortly, followed by the apartments, townhouses and studios. Construction is expected to start next year and be completed within two years.

Mr Zorzi said it was API's biggest development project.