

Village treatment for Abbotsford

By PHILIP HOPKINS

A PRIVATE developer has plans for a \$250 million apartment complex beside the Yarra River in Abbotsford that will open up the area to bike riders and other people.

It aims to create a village-like, rural environment, with cafes, public artwork and bike paths along the river bank.

The site is on a bend in the river, giving the 580-apartment development access to water on most sides, with the main entrance on Victoria Street.

The developer, Hamton, a specialist in residential apartments in inner and middle-Melbourne, is run by Paul Hameister and Steve Buxton, son of Max Buxton of MAB fame.

Its joint-venture partner is industry super fund ISPT, which looks after the retirement savings of more than 40 per cent of the Australian workforce. Abbotsford will be the partners' third project.

The development has been presented to the City of Yarra and is subject to community consultation until Tuesday. Marketing is expected to begin before the end of next year.

Mr Hameister told BusinessDay that the site had a sloping embankment.

"It's tailor-made for public use and is a 'front yard' not available elsewhere," he said. The Yarra in most places had steep banks and was inaccessible to the public.

The complex will have three "fingers", with all apartments



An artist's impression of the apartments for the bend in the Yarra: The site will be developed in three parts.

having views. Mr Hameister said it had been designed so that it could be built in three stages in today's debt environment.

"There will be a degree of commonality at the podium level but there will be differences at the tower level," he said.

The tallest building will have 11 levels and the other two eight levels, each housing a variety of apartment sizes.

Existing buildings on the site will be demolished. One has been vacated by British Aerospace and

another tenant, Honeywell, will shift out in a year.

Mr Hameister said the bike track along the Yarra went in front of the site, which would have new bike paths and a bike hire business. "The public will be given access to the site through an 'urban plaza' and a semi-public courtyard, while pedestrian streets will give access to the river bank," he said. Effectively, 28 per cent of the site would be open to the public.

Mr Hameister said there would be one car park per apartment, but

the aim was to encourage use of public transport and bike riding. Artwork by local artists would be displayed throughout the complex and embankments.

The development aims to have a six-star energy rating, with gas-boosted solar hot water and water-sensitive urban design, including rainwater harvesting for irrigation and toilet flushing, and stormwater management and filtration.

LINK
▶ www.hamton.com.au