

Office block to be carbon neutral

By **ADAM MORTON**

DEVELOPER Grocon plans to build what it says will be Australia's first carbon-neutral office building on the northern edge of the Melbourne CBD.

The designers of the Pixel Building expect to offset the greenhouse emissions generated in its daily operation and, eventually, all carbon embodied in the materials used in its construction.

The four-storey, \$6 million prototype will be the first built as part of Grocon's delayed development of the long-relict former CUB site, on the corner of Queensberry and Bouverie streets in Carlton.

Its features will include an insulating rooftop native garden with solar panels and wind turbines, a grey water recycling system that uses reed beds as window shades and a system that distributes fresh air through individually controlled desktop vents.

Grocon chief executive Daniel Grollo said the Pixel Building went a step further than "carbon zero" projects by guaranteeing all carbon used in the construction of the \$6 million, four-storey office block would be offset over the life of the building, nominated as 50 years.

He said the company would pay up to 20 per cent more to make the building state of the art.

"We see this very much as a study of what future buildings are going to be," Mr Grollo said.

"There are several small



The \$6 million Pixel Building.

buildings (similar to) the Pixel Building in Germany and the US, but we believe this will be the first of its type in an urban environment."

Green Building Council of Australia chief executive Romilly Madew said the project reflected a "flight to quality" in building design. "This type of industry leadership in a recession should be absolutely applauded," she said.

Work on the building is due to start in July and be completed by March next year. It will be used by Grocon staff for the next four years as the CUB site is developed.

The project's general manager, David Waldren, said Grocon this week received a heritage permit to begin a three-month archaeological assessment of the site next summer.

The financial crisis has changed and delayed the project. Mr Waldren said four residential buildings and a retail centre would open by 2013. A skyscraper planned to rival Eureka Tower has been delayed indefinitely.