

TIMBER 'DELTA' DAWNS

MELBOURNE GETS AUSTRALIA'S FIRST CLT APARTMENTS

We predicted the coming of the European CLT multi-storey construction technology to Australasia nearly two years ago, and now it is a reality, with the news that Grocon will build a carbon-neutral timber apartment block in Melbourne.



Design concept for Melbourne's all-timber 10-storey apartment building

The 'passive house' apartments, to be known as Delta, will be built within Grocon's Carlton Brewery site it bought in 2006 for A\$39 million at the top end of Swanston St.

Already on the site is Grocon's distinctive Pixel building – opened mid-2010 as the first carbon-neutral building in Australia, with maximum points under the Green Building Council's Green Star rating system.

The company's site general manager David Waldren says Grocon (Australia's leading private construction company) will expand that thinking with the Delta project. "We want to go further than ever before in the development and construction industry ... and make the Pixel thinking widely available to homeowners.

"We believe homeowners should have the opportunity to take advantage of technology available around the world and achieve the most sustainable home possible.

"With the Federal Government's announcement that there will be a carbon price from 1 July, 2012, we must all be ready for a new way of living and working. The carbon-constrained economy is upon us."

Delta will be a prefabricated structure made with

cross-laminated timber (CLT), rising to 10 storeys with 50 apartments. (It will thus eclipse the nine-storey Stadthaus apartments in East London, which we have featured several times.)

In an extension of the Pixel thinking, the project will use FSC certified wood products. It will be based on the Passive House Standard, well known throughout Europe where around 20,000 houses, mainly in Austria, Germany and Scandinavia, have achieved the standard in the past 20 years.

Waldren says the passive concept involves achieving the best indoor standard of heating and cooling possible – captured in the way a house is designed and manufactured, rather than through the use of gas or electricity.

"A passive house needs very little energy to achieve a high level of comfort and heats and cools itself. It has an airtight building envelope, is very well-insulated and the timber window frames feature triple glazing."

The team working on Delta is the same that worked on Pixel – Grocon, studio 505 architects and sustainability consultants Umow Lai.

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