

DECOR & DESIGN / THE FAWKNER RESIDENCES

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Designers Daniel Stellini and Stephen Javens of K.P.D.O.; elegant flourishes within The Fawkner, right and below.

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Homage to timeless luxury

There's change afoot on St Kilda Road. Take a closer look at Melbourne's grandest boulevard and you might spy a trend away from office buildings back in favour of residential. The Fawkner Residences is a case in point. This development of 249 luxury apartments is a reinstatement of the road's traditional real estate values, but one with a real difference.

The Fawkner Residences flies in the face of the trend to raze offices to the ground to make way for a new development, via a dramatic reinterpretation of a 1970s office building, fitted out with luxe modern references paying homage to its past.

And it's all thanks to developer Les Smith of LAS Group being dazzled by the garden setting of the 0.6-hectare site abutting Fawkner Park, the incredible views (which can't be built out thanks to various heritage overlays), and the good bones, high ceilings and great natural light of the existing building.

"There was a fleeting temptation to demolish it and replace it with 400 apartments, but at the time I'd been on a protracted journey to find an apartment to suit my design sensibilities and I couldn't find anything," says Smith. "They were all so claustrophobic, and I thought that frustration must be shared by other people leaving behind big yards and houses for an inner-city apartment."

In an attention-grabbing example of upcycling on a grand scale, the elegant L-shaped office block shell was retained in the build. Although it is not recognisable from its previous

incarnation, designers K.P.D.O. haven't entirely thrown out the baby with the bathwater.

"It was a striking building – one of the earlier highrises on St Kilda Road – and we wanted to breathe new life into an early landmark," says K.P.D.O. director Stephen Javens.

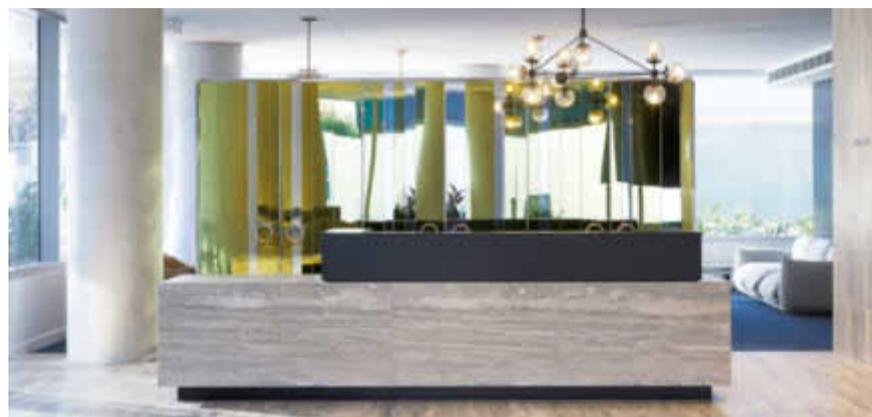
"We were after timeless design rather than something that epitomised fashionable design in 2017 and we actually found that working within the space created more opportunities than constraints."

Oak timber flooring might sound like the essence of 2017, but what

about flamed granite kitchen benchtops that see the high-gloss stone villain of kitchens from 40 years ago revived, but in a new form? "If it's honed and leathered, it gets a slight texture to it and you can see the real beauty of the stone, without the reflections," says Javens. "It's a wonderful material."

Other subtle 1970s references in the apartments and public spaces – among them two lounges, a meeting room, theatre, wine cellar, dining room and a seventh-floor pool overlooking St Kilda Road – include the generous use of travertine, gold and silver striated mirroring in the reception area, and bespoke handles – some of circular timber, others of brass and travertine.

And it even extends to the choice of plants used in the entrance gallery walkway and outside planter beds, including the strikingly tropical monstera and the vigorous devil's ivy. "They're the new fiddle-leaf fig," says Smith. "Or perhaps you could say they're the old fiddle-leaf fig." 



thefawkner.com.au