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Paris Inspires Office-to-Short-Stay Swap at St Kilda



Inspired by Parisian fashion icon Collette, a Melbourne-based developer wants to change change direction with its proposal for St Kilda.

Melbournia Group has filed amended plans with the City of Port Phillip to change the proposed use of the 376sq m site at 190 St Kilda Road from office to short-stay accommodation.

The developer has planning permission for a six-storey office project with a ground-floor cafe on the site.

They now want an extra storey and a swap to 48 serviced apartments with a basement level for eight car parking bays and are creating an operator brand to run this and other future projects.

“The intention is to create a brand for the serviced apartments as a separate operator,” Melbournia Group founder Zoe Zhu told *The Urban Developer*.

But they also want a touch of France and to that end are in talks with a French bistro based in St Kilda to occupy the cafe tenancy.

And in a nod to Collette’s famous basement water bar, there are plans to incorporate a water bar on the St Kilda project’s rooftop.

The bar would serve a variety of bottled water.

“That’s exactly the design that we were looking for, those kind of concepts, where they store waters from all over the world,” Zhu said.

“Something healthy, but also quirky.”

Collette in Paris closed in 2017 but Zhu is hoping to bring some of that design and aesthetic back.



▲ PTD Studio's rendering of the proposal for 190 St Kilda Road.

“We want to create excitement,” Zhu said. “You can turn the boring things into exciting things.

“We think [St Kilda] really needs something ... to actually make it more popular, more of a destination, rather than what it is now.”

The PTD Studios-designed plans also include a reception and bicycle storage on the ground floor with a gym on a mezzanine level.

The building would be 1.8m taller than the original approved height of 21.7m and include a digital billboard on the roof.

Two lots make up the site: a 185sq m parcel at 190 St Kilda Road and a 191sq m site at 192 St Kilda Road.

The first was purchased in 2017 and the second in 2012, according to title deeds submitted with the application.

Melbournia director Kevin Fong said that the site's small size meant that creating traditional apartments was not feasible.

“It's a slim size and therefore we can only fit so much,” Fong said. “So our plan was to do more studio-type apartments.”

Zhu said making things feasible remained difficult so going small made sense.

The City of Port Phillip will now be the determining authority for the application.

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ARTICLE

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