

AMP's vision for Brisbane site

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March 2, 2011



The failed Vision Tower proposal.

Investment giant AMP Capital has secured a stake in one of two high-rise buildings to be built on the former Vision Tower site in the Brisbane CBD.

It is understood AMP Capital's Select Property Portfolio 3 Fund invested \$30 million in a commercial tower to be built on the site located between Mary and Margaret streets.

Confirmation of the investment came one week after appointed liquidator Deloitte settled the sale of the site.

The investment is the strongest indication yet the towers will be built on the long-vacant site, which currently has approval for one commercial high-rise and one residential high-rise.

AMP Capital head of opportunity funds Dale Phillips said the site was well positioned, with new A-Grade environmentally rated office space expected to be in high demand in the coming years.

"This investment will provide an excellent opportunity for our investors as it provides our fund with an attractive opportunity to participate in the future development of the office component of the site," he said.

AMP Capital has been in negotiations with the site's buyer Billbergia Group about the tower's design since November last year.

Billbergia is expected to lodge of formal development application to Brisbane City Council next month.

Billbergia business development manager Ian Troy remained tight-lipped about the final design, but said it would incorporate mix of commercial, residential and retail space.

Of the residential tower he said: "It will be more appealing to the buying public because there will be greater amenities available to them."

Billbergia bought the site that would have housed the \$1 billion Austcorp Vision Tower in July for a reported \$40 million.

The Vision concept was flattened by the global financial crisis, leaving a \$25 million, seven-level hole in the ground.

The site gained even more prominence earlier this year when the state government announced plans to build an underground subway station at lower Albert Street, although the plans were delayed in the wake of the Brisbane flood.

Deloitte partner Chris Campbell said investors in the original tower could now be reimbursed by independent trustee Piper Alderman Lawyers.

"The trustee will begin releasing deposit [and bond] funds, as provided for in the pre-sale contracts, as soon as possible," he said.

Billbergia Group, which is owned by John Kinsella, has millions of dollars worth of luxury apartment developments around Sydney, including the Australia Towers development at Homebush.

The Select Property Portfolio 3 Fund, which is geared towards high-risk property opportunities, has previously invested with Billbergia in the Sydney development.