

6 December 2015 | Amanda Lucas

FOLLOWING a five month battle with a neighbour over access to a stunning Brisbane CBD view, David and Miranda Seeney are preparing to turn the first sod on their Ascot dream. The young couple behind Definitive Developments embarked on what is their first project together in 2014, unaware of the complications tied to the purchase of 59 Lapraik St.

“While we had expectations and a budget, coming across that Planning and Environment Court appeal has by far been one of the most expensive things to go through,” Mr Seeney said. “As soon as the appeal started it hit the brakes on everything. “Lenders don’t want to touch the project and you can’t push on with marketing because you don’t know whether you’re going to be marketing the same product when it comes out of this appeal process.”

The matter settled out of court on September 17 and the Seeneyes, who sold a house and rental property to fund their Ascot aspiration, are relieved with the result. “The biggest outcome of the whole process was the building shifting forwards a meter from the rear boundary, and some other minor things,” Mr Seeney said.

“The fact is we still walked away with the approval and minor changes, meaning the appeal didn’t have too much ground.” “Construction-wise, building-wise, design-wise, specification-wise it’s just autopilot for us,” Mrs Seeney said.

“It’s just all these other aspects we’re not 100 per cent across that have been the biggest learning curve. “Feedback we’ve received is it’s not this hard for anyone else and the fact that you’ve persevered and still going is a testament to us and our drive so that’s been nice to hear but at the same time, we would’ve liked it to be easier.

“The people in the industry are going ‘you’ve done well to hang in this long because a lot of people would’ve given up’.” The Seeneyes are on the cusp of bringing their idea to life with construction on Nido Apartments starting February and a completion date flagged for next October/November. The 12 apartments are orientated to the south to take in the stunning CBD view, come with two car parking spaces and secure storage in the basement, have lift service from basement car park to apartment entry level, and access to communal gardens and a recreational area. The two-bedroom units range up to 109sq m and are priced at \$760,000 while the three-bedroom units span from 130sq m to 142sq m and are priced from \$915,000.

“Everything’s focused on that view and to achieve that all the units are set over two levels,” Mr Seeney said. “While we call them units, they’re comparable to a town house.” “A lot of developments are all about money, turnover and cramming a lot of people into a small amount of space,” Mrs Seeney added. “Whereas Dave and I have a very strong passion for quality over quantity and we wanted to make a point of difference with the quality of the finishes, the space and obviously the view as well.”

When it boils down to the dollar, the Seeneyes agree their project doesn’t stack up just yet but it’s hard to put a price on a dream. “Finding the right team for a development is paramount because if anyone, for any project, just looks at the numbers there’d never be developments like what we’re about to do here,” Mr Seeney said. “This whole thing is definitely the dream for Miranda and I, and what kept us energised during the Planning and Environment process. “With everything that’s gone on, you still look at that dream and go ‘that’s what we’re trying to turn into a reality and this is why I’ll do it again’.”

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