

Vertu Private Estate's sales office demonstrates that alternative forms of construction can provide premier homes built faster than traditional houses.

A smart alternative



In a traditional market like Perth, where consumers have a penchant for double brick homes, developer Stockland wanted to demonstrate that alternative forms of construction can also provide an ideal, cost-effective and stylish solution.

At Vertu Private Estate in Forrestdale, 18kms from Perth's CBD, Stockland is creating a residential community aimed at the upper end of the market. Stockland's Paul Brown says that the estate is underpinned by an air of exclusivity. "We wanted to enhance the site's landscape and create a natural haven for the new community," says Brown.

"We've pitched it at the premium end of the market. We saw there was a niche in the market for a top end product and Vertu basically brings together all the elements of a high quality estate that offers aspirational buyers a chance to upgrade within their local area. One of the things we wanted

to do was create a clear point of difference not only with our competition generally but specifically with two nearby projects."

Part of this differentiation is the result of the desire to showcase an alternative form of building.

This has been achieved through the purpose-designed and built sales office at Vertu, which has been designed as a home, as opposed to a typical demountable sales and marketing suite.

"We wanted to try something different," says Brown. "This is a custom designed building that can be retrofitted into a home. We wanted to show consumers that there are different construction techniques from your standard double brick home, which is common in this region."

The sales offices, designed and built by Lifestyle Homes, has achieved this aim. "Most people don't know it's not double brick," says Brown. "We tell people to go up to the

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Stockland sales office, Vertu, Forrestdale, WA. Summit Homes, using Scyon™ Linea™ weatherboard and Scyon™ Trim, HardiTex® system and Versilux® lining.



The interior of the Stockland sales office Vertu, Forrestdale, WA, by Summit Homes.

walls and tap them. It looks just like rendered double brick.”

This “demonstration” building is also a response to the recent construction and housing boom in Western Australia, which has seen construction lead times increase due to high demand. “When we constructed it, the building boom was at its peak and it took well over a year – sometimes, 18 months – to build a traditional two-storey home. We wanted to give people an idea that construction doesn’t have to take this long. The sales office went up in 14 weeks. It was amazing how quickly it could be built.”

Lifestyle Homes Sales and Marketing Manager, Cameron Lade, says this was an opportunity to show the market what was possible. “Consumers are very fixed on double brick construction. But a house made from lightweight materials isn’t a problem for them if it’s a holiday house, say in Margaret River,” says Lade.

“More people are beginning to see the benefits of architectural design of framed houses. It allows you to do something different than regular double brick. The market

will evolve and we’ll see more framed houses in the future.”

The sales office has a modern look and uses a number of James Hardie® products. “We adapted an existing display home by modifying it to suit a sales office,” says Lade. “We were able to achieve an architectural style with the skillion roof and really opened up the main sales area with the expanse of glass.”

According to Brown, the sales office is also 5 star under the BCA. “Quite a number of people are surprised by that,” says Brown. “Many brick and tile homes this year have

Snapshot

DEVELOPMENT	Vertu
DEVELOPER	Stockland
TYPE OF PROJECT	Residential estate
LOCATION	Perth, Western Australia

shown they can be 5 star, but this building shows there are alternative construction techniques that can also achieve 5 star – and be built much quicker.”

Brown says that while Vertu has design guidelines for builders, these are not too prescriptive, so consumers can incorporate their own tastes and preferences. Nevertheless, the guidelines do require that two colours and/or two materials are in the front elevation of homes.

“The sales office has helped in demonstrating this because it has three colours and two different materials. Our aim is to offer education and best practice guidance not with mandatory controls but through demonstration. When people see the quality, they will be inspired by what they see and then take it on voluntarily.” ■



The Stockland sales office at Vertu, Forrestdale, WA, was custom designed so that it can be retrofitted into a home.



Stockland sales office. Vertu, Forrestdale, WA. Summit Homes, using Scyon™ Linea weatherboard and Scyon™ Trim, HardiTex system and Versilux lining.

What products were used?

Scyon™ Linea™ weatherboard

scyon

What is it? A distinctive horizontal weatherboard with deep shadow lines providing a sought after design aesthetic.

Where do you use it? Ideal for exterior cladding including composite construction, upper storey and ground level extensions, gable ends and feature walls in residential applications.

Scyon™ Trim

scyon

What is it? A durable, decorative building material.

Where do you use it? Ideal for edge treatment around windows, finishing touches to internal and external corners, design enhancement at butt joints, and can be used in cavity construction where specified for use.

HardiTex® system

What is it? A strong base sheet that is designed to be acrylic render coated with colour and texture, giving a beautiful rendered look without the need for masonry.

Where do you use it? As an external cladding on traditional or contemporary homes. Also ideal for ground level or upper storey extensions.

Versilux® lining

What is it? A premium internal wall lining that creates a tough, worry-free foundation for walls in high-impact areas. Its smooth surface and square edges provide a smooth panelled look.

Where do you use it? In kitchens, laundries, stairwells, family rooms, and can also be used in exposed beam ceilings and soffits.

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