Inner-city development needn't be at the expense of a city's history. In fact, sometimes the opposite applies — a new development highlights and preserves heritage elements.

PMP Property Group's The Mill Albion development in inner-city Brisbane, designed by architect Richard Kirk, is centred on the historic Albion Flour Mill, built in 1905, at a time when Australia was feeling the effects of its worst economic depression. The mill operated for more than 70 years before closing in 2000.

The Mill will live on, however. Through The Mill Albion project, the five-storey building is being converted into 11 high-end heritage apartments, which will combine contemporary open-plan living with the unique attributes of the historic building.

PMP is also developing two new residential buildings on site, providing 132 one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments. Designed to blend with the historic site and four million site, The Mill Apartments will introduce a complementary mix of new materials and refined finishes.

The company says the success of the design is reflected in early sales — within three months of the Mill launch, 85% of the apartments were sold.

Two commercial buildings are also planned. The five buildings, including the renovated mill, will be linked at ground level by a series of public plazas and vibrant retail spaces.

Matthew Mike, PMP executive general manager Queensland, says the Mill development is Brisbane's latest transit-oriented development (TOD). It is adjacent to Albion Railway Station and has been designed to deliver an intimate village-style community.

"Its mixed-use nature will attract a wide variety of individuals and add to the liveliness of the destination,“ Kirk says.

The historic mill is framed by red brick walls and incorporates timber structures and slat louvres. Miller says the timber columns alone, which each measure 300mm x 300mm, exemplify masterful building techniques from a bygone era.

Richard Kirk says the mill conversion was designed to preserve much of the original material.

"Brick walls will be exposed and, where appropriate, recycled bricks will be used throughout the development," he says. "Honed concrete will complement the finishes used in apartments, creating an industrial aesthetic. And to ensure the public, as well as residents, appreciate the heritage building, there will be cafes, restaurants and retail facilities at ground level."