

## PARQUE

## A WALK IN THE PARQUE

DEVELOPER : SP Setia

MAIN CONSTRUCTION COMPANY : Hickory Group

ARCHITECT : Fender Katsalidis Architects

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER : Robert Bird Group

CONSTRUCTION VALUE : \$106 million

Spanning across 9,000m<sup>2</sup>, the \$106M Parque Apartments consists of 332 luxury apartments situated across two iconic glass towers. Connected by a private outdoor area, featuring a 25m infinity pool, clubhouse, library, function room and outdoor terraces, the Parque apartments epitomises the perfect mix of contemporary and heritage luxuries.

The Parque apartments project has created two iconic glass towers housing 332 luxury apartments connected by a private outdoor area. Features of the development include a 25m infinity pool, clubhouse, library and function rooms.

Melbourne-based Hickory Group, which has been in business since 1991, was invited to tender and won the design and construct contract. It follows a successful relationship with the same developer, Malaysian-based SP Setia, on the Fulton Lane development, their first in Australia.

Hickory's founders are fourth-generation builders, Michael and George Argyrou, and through their leadership, the company has become one of the nation's top construction groups with a reputation for innovation and dynamism.

Hickory is an integrated company with more than 600 staff and provides its clients with turnkey 'best for project' solutions. They've successfully completed projects across Australia and have specialised inhouse divisions including construction, formwork, façade, fitout, crane logistics and manufacturing. The company also offers prefabricated building systems, modular bathrooms, joinery, plant hire, design and engineering.

The 9,000m<sup>2</sup> site for the Parque apartments is one of the largest to be developed in recent years with Hickory starting work on the site in January 2015. The heritage-listed grounds feature 150-year-old elms listed on the National Trust of Australia's register of significant trees, requiring careful site coordination to ensure the trees are protected throughout construction.

The Western tower fronting St Kilda Road spans 11-levels, dips to 8-levels in the

centre which offers views of the Shrine of Remembrance and the city, before rising to 19-levels on the Eastern tower. The project has integrated the built and natural environments, blending sculptural glass façade elements with one acre of lush landscaped designer gardens and extensive heritage grounds.

"The tower façade is the main drawcard bringing something different to St Kilda Road, particularly with the heritage elm trees. Building around them gives the site a green feel. There's over an acre of green land associated with the development," said Project Manager, Travis Budd.

Hickory has used its own internal façade management team to spearhead the whole façade procurement to the installation side of the project.

"The curtain wall façade was a complex design element. We needed to do a lot of design development to ensure it was functional, waterproof and aesthetically pleasing and that it fits together as it includes curved double-glazed glass. We identified early on the risks and foreshadowed further issues down the track," said Travis.

The site is adjacent to one of Melbourne's busiest hospitals, the Alfred, and Hickory have managed any potential disturbance to that facility with a site-specific construction management plan and environmental management plan. They've also met with hospital management before the works started and forewarned them when noise and dust work was to occur, plus continue to keep lines of communication open.

"The 3-level basement was the most challenging part of the project," said Travis. "We removed 12,000m<sup>3</sup> of soil from the site

for the basement to be created and the last level was where the water table was. There was a large amount of dewatering which complicated the basement construction. We managed to overcome that by planning and installing the appropriate dewatering needles."

In 2016 the Hickory Group will also have completed Claremont Manor in South Yarra, NewQuay Promenade, La Trobe Tower, which is the nation's tallest pre-fab building and a 17-level hotel in Perth. Other projects underway include Melbourne projects The Fifth, Lakeside Apartments, Opera, Collins House and Banksia Apartments.

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**So how do you protect an avenue of 150-year-old, heritage listed elm trees during the construction of a residential development on a 9,000m<sup>2</sup> site?** Give the job to a proven industry heavy weight with 20 years experience on the books.

That's why Hickory approached Arbor Co to protect the elms on the Parque development. It's also why Tree Logic, one of the largest consultancies in the arboriculture industry, recently acquired Arbor Co. For Arbor Co clients, bolting into an industry leader with 10 full-time consulting arborists is a big bonus – now the entire lifecycle of a project can be catered for: from pre-development planning and advice to ribbon cutting and beyond. It's a first for the industry.

“Managing infrastructure is one thing, but managing mature green assets is an organic process requiring expertise and strong problem resolution skills. Finding solutions for our customers using contemporary techniques is what we specialise in. Linking this to a consulting culture builds our capacity to cater for challenging projects. We're responsive, and flexible, which minimises disruption to construction activity. On a complex site it means our clients can meet the delivery timelines without compromising the trees,” said James Martens-Mullaly, Arbor Co's new Managing Director.

Arbor Co's approach to the challenges on the Parque site is a great example. Starting with vegetation removal and pruning, the team prepared an extensive protection zone around the 20m high trees, which included weeding and mulching, and advising on irrigation requirements. They also treated the trees against pests to preserve and enhance their condition.

“As the site arborists we inherited a tree management plan. We had to take the plan, interpret it, provide follow-on consultancy, and do the operational works. It's a complex site, particularly with the constraints of large trees, which created access issues for the

construction works. Fenced tree protection zones were established to protect the trees and their roots from damage,” said James.

As construction progressed and site congestion increased there was pressure to access the protection zone.

“What many people overlook is the roots, the hidden half of a tree, where often the most damage can happen. Protecting roots and the soil is equally as important as protecting the trunk and branches,” said James.

“We developed design solutions to get heavy plant and machinery on top of root zones whilst preserving the roots and avoiding soil compaction.”

This included a site specific, temporary road to allow heavy construction vehicles to operate within 1m of the tree trunks, and even included irrigation under the roadways to ensure the tree roots were kept healthy. Much of the ground protection had to stay in situ for more than 12 months.

“With such a tight area to work in you can't predict how the site will unfold. When there was a query regarding work around a tree or what the impact of a particular design or construction element might be, that's where we came in with our expertise. It was a seamless information flow from the consultancy to the operational side of the business.”

The measure of success won't be how the trees look at ribbon cutting day, but how they perform five years down the track. However, with the trees presently in better condition than before the project commenced, James is quietly confident they will be complimenting the site for decades to come.

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