



THE CORNERSTONES OF VILLAGE LIFE ARE COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT, TWO THINGS THAT AREN'T NECESSARILY SYNONYMOUS WITH THE HUSTLE AND BUSTLE OF SYDNEY LIFE. IN **EASTLAKES LIVE**, ELITE ARCHITECTURAL FIRM FRANCIS-JONES MOREHEN THORP AND CROWN GROUP ARE COLLABORATING TO REDEFINE VILLAGE LIFE AND COMMUNITY IN A MODERN CITY. **RAKHEE GHELANI** DISCOVERS HOW THEY ARE ACHIEVING THIS.

Eastlakes is a hidden gem in Sydney's south-east. Surrounded by Randwick, Rosebery and Kingsford, it was only a matter of time before this local secret was uncovered. Now ripe for transformation, Crown Group has tasked architectural firm Francis-Jones Morehen Thorp (fjmt) with the challenge of revitalising this tired retail complex into an urban village that honours its community heritage while bringing it into the modern world.

Redefining urban lifestyle

Modern-day life is chaotic with little respite from harsh concrete and flashing neon lights. With this in mind, fjmt wanted to redefine urban lifestyle by bringing the organic environment into a residential world, creating a natural sanctuary. To achieve this, the fjmt team needed to reimagine how people interact with their local environment. Rather than separating the adjoining parklands and golf courses, fjmt integrated them into the design.

"We wanted to complement the landscape, not overpower it," explains Simon Barr, Principal at fjmt. "Our design blends the open parklands into both the residential and retail precincts. ►

THE NEW EAST

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From top left: No expense has been spared to make the Eastlakes Live apartments into beautiful and functional homes; Eastlakes in 1936; The rejuvenated Eastlakes development from above; Moore Park Golf Course; Local retailers; and Apartments boast city skyline views.



We’ve created a new canopy that integrates the park and breaks down the scale of the buildings so they feel human and inviting. The design also takes advantage of the views towards Moore Park Golf Course and the CBD.”

Integrating community

Eastlakes is a tight-knit community. Many of its residents came from overseas and together they have created a unique multicultural landscape. It’s this community that has inspired both the residential and retail design.

“It was important to us that the development was a good neighbour to the existing community. It integrates into their vibrant lifestyle and complements it,” explains Barr. “We’ve achieved this on the retail side by creating a small scale and intimate shopping experience on Evans Avenue. The local community has an intimate connection with their retailers and we wanted to maintain and enhance this. There are also undercover awnings that will be filled with community dining and a large promenade adjoining the parklands.”

This concept also appeals to newcomers. Alana Morton moved to the area with her husband, Shane and young daughter, Zara, drawn to the village environment. “We wanted to have the best of both worlds. The area has a great suburban, community feel and it also has a growing café and restaurant precinct, which makes it exciting and lively,” she comments.

Morton didn’t know much about the area before she moved. “I used to drive past Eastlakes all the time but never stopped there. Now, like most locals, we spend a lot of time in the area,” she continues. “To me, community is about people who want to spend time in the place they live in because they feel connected to it. In Eastlakes, you can see the locals sipping



coffee and playing in the parks. It’s such a lovely environment to live in.”

The appeal of the region goes beyond modern conveniences. “My husband loves that there are three or four golf clubs nearby and there are also plenty of parks for our daughter to play in,” comments Morton. “We also appreciate the finer things in life and that’s all about having choice. In this area we’re spoilt for choice – we’re close to the city, beaches and even our favourite gelato bar. The airport is just 15 minutes away and there’s plenty of public transport, so we’re never stuck in traffic. Living here is a lifestyle choice for us.”

Appreciating the finer things

While the external spaces will set a new benchmark, Crown Group’s vision for Eastlakes Live is to also epitomise luxury from within. Taking the award-winning Top Ryde City Living development as its inspiration, Crown Group set out to rejuvenate the concept of apartment life in Eastlakes. “With Top Ryde City Living, we



designed an urban resort with access to luxury amenities, fantastic views and a great central location,” says Crown Group CEO, Iwan Sunito. “Eastlakes Live takes that award-winning model and builds upon it.”

Every detail of the apartments has been meticulously designed with world-class architecture and luxury in mind. From the natural stone benchtops to the metallic detail throughout the bathrooms, no expense has been spared to create beautiful and functional homes. Smart features make life effortless and clever design creates an atmosphere of complete privacy, allowing residents to close the door on the outside world.

“We wanted to capture the panoramic views down to the local community and adjoining parklands while maintaining privacy between apartments. To achieve this we’ve used screens and louvres that are movable in some instances, so you can create your own personal sanctuary,” explains Barr.

Like a private resort, the inner sanctum of the residential community includes a diverse range of spaces and experiences for interaction and escape. A rooftop bar makes the perfect setting for house parties, while movies can be featured on the giant screen with the city skyline as the backdrop. Residents of Eastlakes will be able to entertain within the privacy of their own locale and enjoy crystal clear pools, jogging tracks and relaxation areas nestled amid native plants in their own exclusive community.

“This is a new way to experience private open spaces that we haven’t seen before in Australia,” comments Barr. “The focus has been on quality and detail in the design and construction. It’s proof that Crown Group is leading the way in creating integrated mixed-use developments that bring together function and the highest quality.” 🍷

DOWN TO THE LAST DETAIL

Maintaining privacy in a residential development is challenging when you want to integrate and connect with the community. The design overcomes this with:

Clever landscaping that blends into the surrounding environment.

Multiple points of access to the residential buildings, creating permeability.

Multiple private open spaces for residents to spend time in.

The integration of large-scale community spaces with private spaces seamlessly.

Smart louvres and screens to bring the outdoors in.