

Media Release

3 October 2023



St. Clare: redesigning retirement living

[VMCH](#) is thrilled to announce renowned global architecture studio [Woods Bagot](#) as the designer of its world-class, over 55's development, coming soon to prestigious Studley Park, Kew.

[St. Clare](#), on Studley Park Rd, will offer a new standard of living for retirees within its 104 premium apartments, with innovative architecture, expansive green spaces and breath-taking views.

VMCH Executive General Manager of Retirement Living Liz Hickey says the \$250m development will breathe new life into the long-held 1.4ha site and meet critical demand for retirement housing options.

"Everything from the precinct's design through to the way we take it to market and the facilities and services we'll deliver to residents will push the envelope for retirement living in Australia," Ms Hickey says.

"We are thrilled to work with the highly skilled team at Woods Bagot, who will help us merge the site's unique past – once home to now-relocated disability services – with a contemporary future, delivering an unrivalled lifestyle for residents.

"Two historic mansions will be brought back to their former glory and re-purposed into shared spaces. Woods Bagot has also drawn inspiration from the Kew surrounds, replicating the mansard style roofing of the area's grand homes, and offering house-sized apartment floorplans that don't compromise on space."

Blair Parkinson, Associate Principal at Woods Bagot and project architect, describes working on such a generous site – with its heritage buildings, array of mature trees and proximity to Melbourne city – as a "once-in-a-generation opportunity".

"Our vision from the start was to create a community village that was immersed in the beauty of nature," says Mr Parkinson.

"For the design team, it was crucial to work with the site and not against it. We took a considered, holistic approach ... interweaving the beauty of the existing landscape, the prominence of the heritage buildings and proposing new contemporary residential buildings sympathetic to the surrounding Kew vernacular."

With VMCH an established home care provider, what also sets St. Clare apart will be the offering of services to aid ageing in place, reflecting growing demand from retirees.

Mr Parkinson says Woods Bagot kept this front of mind in decision making, creating homes that can adapt to suit the needs of the owner without infringing on their aesthetic design qualities or spatial considerations.

"Our bathrooms, for example, have been designed so that in future, if required, grab rails can be installed on the walls to the showers and toilets. Bedrooms are oversized with enough space for wheelchair access, and even vanity drawers in bathrooms can be removed without affecting the benchtop design to allow for wheelchair users."

Ms Hickey says the lifestyle offered at St. Clare will be second-to-none, with a 24/7 concierge and manager, and hotel style services for those who prefer to outsource chores like grocery shopping, cooking, cleaning and laundry.

Among the residents' facilities are shared and private dining rooms, a wood paneled library, pool, gym, greenhouse, community gardens, café, massage suites, arts and craft studio, village green, chapel and cinema.

"Research tells us people are now not 'retiring' in the traditional sense. They are entering an exciting new phase in life where they have more time to focus on themselves; they're more active, more engaged and even more indulgent than generations before them," Ms Hickey says.

Mr Parkinson says designing St. Clare – where the entry level price for a two-bedroom apartment is \$1.3 million – gave the designers scope to rethink retirement living architecture.

He adds his favourite feature is the Speakeasy Bar located in the basement under the main dining area.

"The future residents of St. Clare were influenced by Pink Floyd, David Bowie and Elton John," he says. "This is the Led Zeppelin generation we're designing for. They are the quintessentially cool generation, so the Speakeasy Bar is such a relevant addition to the site, something I haven't seen in any other retirement living design and one that we hope to see more of."

[Hacer Group](#) was recently appointed to undertake early works at St. Clare, ahead of a sod turn event on 2 November, 2023. St. Clare is expected to be completed in 2026.

Media enquiries

Cassie Zlonzak

Communications Manager

M: 0402 422 852

E: cassie.zlonzak@vmch.com.au

About VMCH

Here at VMCH, our services are as diverse as the people we support.

Our values underpin the work we do. As a Catholic, for-purpose organisation, compassion, respect and inclusion aren't just words to us, they guide us in everything we do.

Our professional and compassionate teams are with you on your life journey; helping you with a wide range of support from early learning and therapy, specialist education, disability services, affordable homes, residential aged care, retirement living and at home aged care.

While we've been around for over a century, we're always moving forward. Always staying true to who we are by supporting people and families to live their best lives; providing a place to call home and spaces to learn and grow.



About Woods Bagot

Woods Bagot is a global architecture and interior design studio founded in Adelaide more than 150 years ago that practices People Architecture, a celebration of diversity and prosperity across cultures, propelled by a shared sense of empathy, inclusive of flexibility and built for change. Woods Bagot operates from 17 cities in Australia, China, Middle East, Europe, United States, Southeast Asia and New Zealand.