



"We tried to make it feel like you're not in a development, you're in a park," landscape architect Ryan McFall says.

Special Feature

## Growing a sense of community at The Grounds apartments in Ivanhoe East

KATE JONES NEW HOMES EDITOR, MELBOURNE | JUL 30, 2021

**f** Off-the-plan buying isn't what it used to be. In a relatively short time, it has moved out of the hands of investors, trended away from the CBD and left the days of the 40-square-metre shoebox behind.



**p** Today's off-the-plan market is largely aimed at owner-occupiers who want a roomy apartment in an inner to middle-ring suburb, and downsizers represent a large slice of that buyer demographic.

Happily cashed up after selling the family home and riding high on Melbourne's recent property price rises, they are keen to splurge on an apartment not far from home.



The outlook from the development showcases the green surrounds.

The latter is most important for luxury downsizers. Staying put and holding on to a sense of community is vital, even if it means living near new neighbours.

It's the reason why developers throw so much effort at building in areas with great walking options and creating communal spaces. An off-the-plan building that's not far from the local shops and cafes, with a generous garden where residents can relax and socialise, is a double-box-ticker.

It's a compelling proposition that has attracted buyers to **The Grounds**, a development by JWLand coming soon to Ivanhoe East. Sales agent Damian Stoney says residents are making a commitment when they purchase one of its 116 residences priced at between \$1.08 million and \$2.42 million.

"I think people buy in because it will be a community, it won't be a transient place with 50 for-lease signs up all the time," he says. "That's the main attraction – there'll be no investors here."

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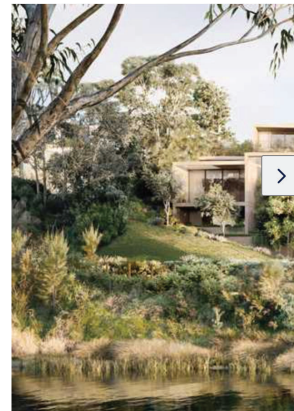
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The average luxury downsizer is no pushover. Most will visit a display suite multiple times, often bringing friends or family along for second, third and fourth opinions.

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Some living areas are accompanied by city views.

And with a healthy number of high-end options on the market, Melbourne's wealthy downsizers are well versed in what makes a quality purchase. This includes weighing up the cost of body corporate fees and striking a balance of just the right amount of extra features.

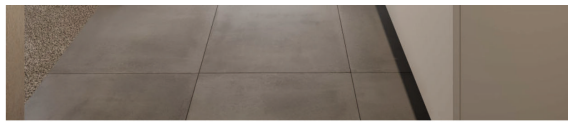
"The older buyer now is a lot smarter than they were five years ago," Stoney says. "So, they're aware pools are a huge cost burden. The body corporate is way less expensive at The Grounds.

"Most new three-bedroom apartments cost \$5000 to \$6000 in body corporate [fees], but here it will be under \$4000 for a three-bedder.

"Because there is a lot around now and they have the freedom to choose, I think the attraction here has also been the apartments are larger; they're definitely larger than the industry average."

Developers are upping the ante when it comes to apartment size and also customising floor plans. Amalgamating apartments has become de rigueur with off-the-plan purchasers.





The spacious bathroom.

Apartments at The Grounds measure up to 247 square metres, and townhomes reach up to 198 square metres.

The site itself is also expansive – 1.5 hectares in total. It's the result of barrister Stuart Morris QC buying up 14 homes in the tightly held area over a period of 26 years and selling them as a development parcel in 2017.

The Grounds is bound by The Boulevard, Cedric Street and Wamba and Wilfred roads, and faces Ivanhoe Park. The tucked-away location and green outlook have proven to be a drawcard, Stoney says.

"A lot of people love that it is going to be very green and not stark, and that's the idea, that it settles into the landscape," he says.

"It's also off the main road. Councils these days are very loath to approve anything off the main road, so in that sense, it will be unlikely to be repeated and that's a big attraction people have talked about."

Like many upmarket developments, the buyer profile at The Grounds is retirees or semi-retirees in the 50-plus age group. Many have holiday houses and are looking for lock-and-leave apartments – or low-maintenance, in other words.

Although they are happy to leave the mower behind, landscaping is still an essential feature for mature buyers.



Space and community are important to buyers in this development market.

Developers JWLand appointed the garden designers at Memla to surround the three separate apartment buildings and townhomes with lush landscaping. Much of the planting takes its reference from the greenery of Ivanhoe Park, landscape architect Ryan McFall says.

"We've included river red gums, ironbarks and lots of indigenous ground covers, which are all prevalent through Ivanhoe Park and some of the reserves adjacent to the Yarra in the Ivanhoe area," he says.

More than half of the site is reserved as open space, which includes a central courtyard with built-in seating and a raised lawn area for residents to enjoy.

There's also an elevated walkway running between the buildings designed to simulate walking among the treetops.

"Through that middle, we tried to make it feel like you're not in a development, you're in a park, and that was the key for that area," McFall says.

The site itself is also expansive – 1.5 hectares. The Grounds launches in August. Construction has already begun and is expected to be completed around September 2022.

#### **The best of Ivanhoe and Ivanhoe East**







There are so many gorgeous green spaces locally like Chelsworth Park. Photo: Michael Rayner

### The Boulevard

Houses on The Boulevard shine every Christmas thanks to the festive spirit of locals, who really know how to light up their gardens and facades.

### The village feel

Locals love the East Ivanhoe Village Centre for the community atmosphere. Cafes, boutique bars, grocers and retail stores make it exclusive, yet friendly.

### Proximity

The CBD is just 10 kilometres away and public transport is made easy with two bus lines and two train stations.

### Architecture

Ivanhoe and Ivanhoe East are the jewels of the north-east thanks to large blocks and architecture from the turn of the century. Contemporary designs feel at home, too.

### The parks

Ivanhoe and Ivanhoe East are spoilt for choice when it comes to green spaces. Among them are Ivanhoe Park, Yarra Flats Park – which includes the Annulus Billabong sanctuary – Chelsworth Park and Wilson Reserve.

### At a glance

#### The Grounds

177 The Boulevard, Ivanhoe East

**Architect:** Architectus developed the site master plan, Front Studio (JWLand's in-house architecture department) completed the design documentation

**Developer:** JWLand

**Number of residences:** 12 townhomes, 104 apartments – 52 two-bed; 48 three-bed; four four-beds

**Internal sizes (sqm):** Two-bed 91-122; three-bed 120-167; four-bed 195-247; townhomes 147-198

**External areas (sqm):** Two-bed 13-43; three-bed 13-91; four-bed 42-124; townhomes 40-193

**Prices:** Two-bed \$1.08m-\$1.53m; three-bed \$1.41m-\$2.08m; four-bed \$2.35m-\$2.42m; townhomes \$1.85m-\$2.4m

**Car parking:** Most residences have two car spaces; all four-beds have three

**Completion estimate:** September 2022

**Agent:** JWLand, Damian Stoney, 0437 388 294 (contact for launch information)

**Open for inspection:** Display suite at 6 Wamba Road, Ivanhoe East, open by private appointment

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