

Samma, Brightlight Nab Second Site for Build-to-Rent Scheme



Property developer Samma Property Group has picked up a 4500sq m site in Melbourne’s Docklands where it has plans for its second build-to-rent apartment project.

The site, at 194 Lorimer Street, is one of four Samma has earmarked for development under a new hybrid model, dubbed ‘designed-to-rent’, that it said would be the first of their kind in Australia.

The site holds an existing approved Precinct Development Plan allowing for a 90m residential tower—subject to planning approval.

If realised, a new residential tower would have river frontage and views towards Melbourne’s CBD, down the Yarra River and towards Port Phillip Bay.

Cushman and Wakefield’s Lukas Byrns, Marcus Neill and Luke Etherington steered the campaign for the site on behalf of Development Victoria.

Byrns said the site was fiercely contested by traditional residential apartment developers and the emerging build-to-rent groups given the demand for well-located apartment project locations.

The Urban Developer approached Cushman and Wakefield for the sale price, which they could not disclose at this point in time.

In October, Samma announced its partnership with investment management firm Brightlight which would [back the developer with a \\$750-million capital raising](#).

The funds will be used to construct its planned “shovel-ready” build-to-rent projects, with further sites under due diligence in Southbank and South Melbourne.

Its first project, which will commence early next year, is planned for a 1000sq m site at 65 Haig Street in Southbank, which the developer picked up for \$12.5 million in September, 2020.

Samma Property Group director Simon Abdelmalak said its latest acquisition would allow the joint-venture partners to deepen their social impact as part of their new investment platform.

“With such close proximity to world-class amenities, the design-to-rent model proposed for Lorimer Street affords a fantastic lifestyle opportunity,” Abdelmalak said



▲ The proposed development will also benefit from \$85 billion of infrastructure projects within the immediate vicinity, including Fishermans Bend, covering approximately 480ha.

Development Victoria group head Geoff Ward said the acquisition and subsequent development marked a significant commitment in Docklands by a “leading developer”.

“The delivery of a high-quality build-to-rent development at Yarra’s Edge in Docklands is a positive indication of ongoing confidence in the property market in Melbourne and Docklands,” Ward said.

“Build-to-rent is becoming more appealing across the Victorian market and it is encouraging to see Docklands as being sought out for this kind of development.”

Samma’s model, aimed at millennials aged between 25 and 45, will offer “high-end” affordable inner-city apartments with 7-star NatHERS rating and 5-star green star certification.

The development’s will provide on-site management teams to serve and support residents and an ongoing activity program aimed to foster connection and improve mental health and wellbeing.

Such activities could range from book clubs for like-minded people to dog walking together to creating opportunities for volunteering. As well, long tenancies will underpin community-building within the projects.

The partnership plans to deliver over 1400 apartments across the four developments from 2022 to 2025, providing new housing for over 2800 residents.

Longer-term, Samma and Brightlight are building a pipeline comprising seven further developments, for over 6200 residents and is expected to be valued at more than \$1.7 billion by 2028.

Melbourne’s 6000-apartment strong build-to-rent pipeline [continues to outstrip Sydney](#), which currently has 3300 apartments in the works and Brisbane with 1600.

The most active area incorporates the CBD and inner portions of Docklands and Southbank, with seven advanced projects, comprising 2700 units, including those with plans approved, submitted or already under construction.