

At Landcom's Garden Gates development, builder Admark has used James Hardie products to gain a competitive edge in the local market.

Ahead of the market





Landcom's sales office at Garden Gates, Mt Annan, NSW. Built by Admark, using Scyon™ Linea™ weatherboard, Scyon™ Matrix™ cladding and Scyon™ Axon™ cladding, Scyon™ Trim.

Landcom has set out to create a master planned residential development at Garden Gates in the south west Sydney area of Mt Annan. Starting from a blank slate, it has provided builders and residents with design and building guidelines that provide advice on everything from architectural features to a list of recommended – and prohibited – garden plants.

According to Landcom Sales Director Greg Barnett, the aim is to create a sustainable community showcasing good urban design, underpinned with smart environmental features.

Although Mt Annan was first opened in the late 1980s, Landcom's latest development at Garden Gates began in late 2004, and the most recent release was in March 2007

with lot prices starting from \$219,000. By May 2007, 260 lots in Garden Gates had been sold and approximately 180 houses had been constructed or were under construction.

Barnett says that Landcom has recently undertaken a review of its consumer touchpoints. "We reviewed our positioning and felt that Landcom really was about creating 'People Places'," says Barnett.

The result is branding that combines messages and images that evoke a sense of people and place. Barnett says that Landcom also wanted to provide an experience for consumers that took them on a journey at the sales office, beginning with an appreciation of Landcom's credentials and expertise, and leading to an appropriate customer-friendly setting for discussions on the unique nature of the Garden Gates development.

With the sales office being an integral consumer touchpoint, Landcom also commissioned the construction and design of a new sales office at Garden Gates, which has been heralded for its innovative design.

Modern, innovative – and portable

While most sales offices tend to be little more than portable sheds plonked at the front of an estate, this sales office takes pride of place overlooking the nearby lakes and hills. Custom-built for Garden Gates, it is a contemporary architect-designed building that is also relocatable.

"We wanted to create something of substance," says Barnett. "But it's also great to have the option to move it later if we want to. It is important to maintain maximum flexibility for opportunities on alternate sites. If we had built a traditional dwelling we would have been limited to a design that needed to be retrofitted into a domestic dwelling."

While most sales offices tend to be little more than portable sheds plonked at the front of an estate, this sales office is a contemporary architect-designed building that is also relocatable

Landcom used local building company Admark to create the sales office. Admark, which specialises in the construction and development of residential homes in south western Sydney, has also designed homes specifically for the estate. Director of Admark, Adrian Salter, says that the sales office's unique capacity to be relocatable is largely possible because of the use of James Hardie™ products.

"It's designed to be cut into three sections and then moved on a truck," says Salter. "The beauty is that it doesn't look like a portable building. It looks like partial masonry and partial lightweight construction materials – but it's actually all lightweight. Most sales offices look like a toilet block or a lunch shed; this almost looks like a beach house."

Salter was able to draw on the expertise of BHI Architectural to work with Admark on the building. This collaboration is the result of James Hardie's innovative BusinessBuilder™ program, which engaged BHI Architectural as part of the design assistance provided to builders to create cutting edge building designs.

Director of BHI Rodney Crawford says that one of the features of the building is its skillion roof. "The roof has been designed to lift up at the front, focusing the outlook of the building out towards the lake," says Crawford. "It's a flat roof plane that's tilted at a 15 degree angle. Quite often when you're designing a building, one of the reasonably common practices is to ground the building itself into the site with a heavy material such as brick, stone or masonry.

"When the building gets to a certain height, you reduce the bulk of the building by utilising products that look and feel less bulky." That's where James Hardie's Scyon™ Axon™ cladding comes in; it has been used to extend the height of the building.

The distinctive blade walls, which serve as a counterpoint to anchor the building, were achieved with James Hardie's Scyon™ Matrix™ cladding – rectangular panels that give the walls a modern, commercial look. "We could have done the blades in block work and rendered them but that would not have achieved a very contemporary result," says Crawford.

This collaboration is the result of James Hardie's innovative BusinessBuilder program





These days, Australians want a bit more character in their homes, they don't want a street full of boring, plain facades

A point of difference

Admark has applied the same principles to the residential homes it has designed for the estate. “We’re trying to break up the facades of the homes,” says Salter. “We had to design them so that they weren’t all masonry. So we have a wall that’s partly masonry and partly clad with different James Hardie products to give it a modern look.”

Salter says it has mainly used Scyon™ Linea weatherboard and Scyon™ Matrix cladding to achieve this. “I think that people are looking for something that’s a bit different,” he says. “These days, Australians want a bit more character in their homes. They don’t want a street full of boring, plain facades. They want something to distinguish their house from their neighbours. When you use a mix of products, you get a street of houses that have their own individuality with common themes of good design in a modern, refreshing look.”

This is in line with Landcom’s design guidelines, which state that houses “should feature varied external wall materials and finishes, interesting and articulated building facades”.

Landcom’s Barnett says the result is a better streetscape. “We push quite strongly the need to have a mix of product

types for all outdoor finishes rather than all brick facade.”

Another reason Admark decided to incorporate James Hardie products into its homes was to give them a point of difference in the building market.

“We wanted to give people a product that they couldn’t buy from anyone else,” says Salter. Although Admark still offer consumers traditional brick homes, Salter says it plans to assimilate more houses designed with composite materials into its product range. ■

Snapshot

DEVELOPMENT	Garden Gates
DEVELOPER	Landcom
TYPE OF PROJECT	Residential estate
LOCATION	Mt Annan, south west Sydney
NUMBER OF LOTS	720
INITIAL RELEASE	Late 2004

A revolution in construction and design

BHI's Rodney Crawford says that James Hardie's products provide architects, designers and builders an opportunity to be more creative. In particular, Scyon™ is a new material that builds on James Hardie's core competency in fibre cement and innovation to create an advanced concrete formulation. It adds attributes such as ease of use and longer paint life to low embodied energy and high durability.

"Being able to use these products has certainly created a new dimension in primary lightweight construction," he says. "Compared to previous products that have been available, they have created a bit of a revolution. They are also good in terms of durability and maintenance.

"You see a lot of buildings these days which have a steel frame skeleton and you can put any product on it. Before, the only options were brick and concrete – but now the sky's the limit."

Crawford says that designs for residential homes are slowly moving away from traditional construction methods. "These products have helped to bridge the gap somewhat; they are a slightly more space-age futuristic type of product," he says. "People are heading away from straight face brick and want to utilise materials to give their homes a contemporary edge. They don't cost the earth – and they're easy to fix. They also allow you to be more creative."

People are heading away from straight face brick and want to utilise materials to give their homes a contemporary edge





Scyon™ Linea weatherboard detail.



Scyon™ Matrix cladding and Scyon™ Linea weatherboard detail.

What products were used?

Scyon™ Linea™ weatherboard



What is it? A distinctive horizontal weatherboard with deep shadow lines providing a sought after design aesthetic.

Where do you use it? Ideal for exterior cladding including composite construction, upper storey and ground level extensions, gable ends and feature walls in residential applications.

Scyon™ Matrix™ cladding



What is it? An exterior cladding providing a distinctive, contemporary residential version of a look previously found in commercial applications.

Where do you use it? Wherever a contemporary design is required including composite construction, upper storey and ground level extensions, gable ends and feature walls in residential applications.

Scyon™ Axon™ cladding



What is it? A unique, vertically oriented panel that extends residential design opportunities, delivering durability as well as aesthetic appeal.

Where do you use it? Ideal for exterior cladding including composite construction, upper storey and ground level extensions, gable ends and feature walls in residential applications.

Scyon™ Trim



What is it? A durable decorative building material.

Where do you use it? Ideal for edge treatment around windows, finishing touches to internal and external corners, design enhancer at butt joints, and can be used in cavity construction where specified for use.

Note: In some of the images in this case study, James Hardie products have been used outside the scope of James Hardie's technical literature. It is the designer/specifier's responsibility to identify whether the intended use of products is outside the scope of such literature and, if so, to undertake specific design and detailing and to ensure the construction complies with all relevant codes and regulations.

Ask James Hardie™
Call 13 11 03
www.jameshardie.com.au

