



Bold Design, Smart Solutions

THE CASE STUDY

PROJECT DETAILS

Location
Mt Wellington, Auckland

Project Type
Medium-density housing

Architectural Designer
Sally Zhong, SignArch Ltd

Builder/Developer
Frank Zhang, Foden Living

FEATURED PRODUCTS

- Axon™ Panel Brushed Concrete
- Oblique™ Weatherboard

This seven-home development in Mt Wellington demonstrates how a strategic move to Hardie™ fibre cement cladding achieved budget efficiencies, streamlined council approval, and created a striking curved façade.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

When Foden Living set out to develop seven terraced homes at 29 Camp Road, Mt Wellington, the brief was clear: deliver high-quality, affordable housing for first-home buyers and young families in one of Auckland's most connected suburbs. Close to Sylvia Park, the new IKEA megastore, motorway access and top schools, the site had strong market appeal. The challenge was making the

numbers work while still delivering homes that stand out.

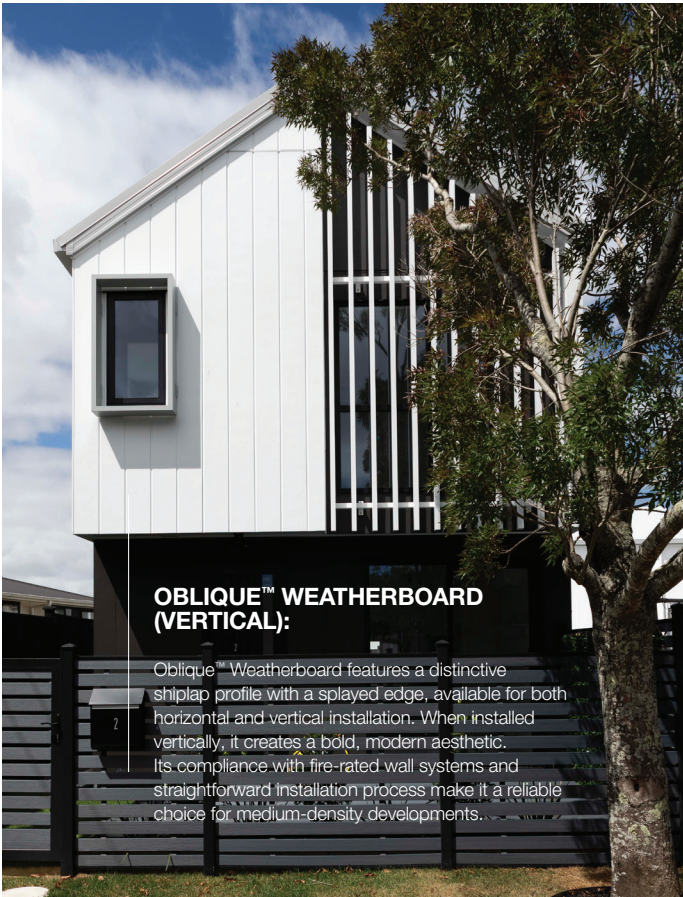
From the outset, architectural designer Sally Zhong of SignArch had a clear vision for the development's exterior.

"The initial design vision was to use the exterior cladding to create a façade with richer texture, while maintaining clean, defined panels," says Sally.

Sally was equally clear-eyed about the commercial pressures shaping the design.

"Density, liveability, aesthetics and budget were all interconnected considerations for this project. The main challenge was the high initial land cost, which necessitated maximising the number of units to alleviate sales price pressure. Therefore, we focused on adding thoughtful detail to the exterior cladding to offer potential buyers a distinctive look compared to similar properties."

The original specification included metal cladding; however, budget constraints arose once pricing was received. Following discussions with Sally, Frank Zhang of Foden Living decided to switch to Hardie™



OBLIQUE™ WEATHERBOARD (VERTICAL):

Oblique™ Weatherboard features a distinctive shiplap profile with a splayed edge, available for both horizontal and vertical installation. When installed vertically, it creates a bold, modern aesthetic. Its compliance with fire-rated wall systems and straightforward installation process make it a reliable choice for medium-density developments.



AXON™ PANEL BRUSHED CONCRETE

Axon™ Panel Brushed Concrete is perfect for creating modern facades, appearing smooth from a distance, but unexpectedly tactile on closer look, it has the versatility to be used stand alone, or paired with other claddings from the James Hardie range.

fibre cement cladding products as a solution that better aligned with the project budget.

Beyond cost, the switch also simplified the council approval process. “We submitted a material variation to change from metal to Hardie™ fibre cement cladding and council immediately approved it,” says Frank. “It easily addressed their questions around fire ratings.”

Sally echoes this confidence, noting: “I consistently choose Hardie™ fibre cement products because their comprehensive fire-rating documentation—available both online and in printed brochures clearly addresses a wide range of fire safety scenarios. Additionally, James Hardie’s technical team’s proactive and helpful support in special situations gives me confidence. This peace of mind is the main reason I continue to specify James Hardie.”

The exterior uses two complementary cladding products to clearly define the ground and upper levels. Axon™ Panel Brushed Concrete was selected for the ground floor, while the upper levels are clad in Oblique™ Weatherboard installed vertically.

The exterior walls are painted in two colours – Dulux® Okarito, a warm white, and Resene® Ironsand, a deep charcoal – reinforcing the bold contrast between the two cladding zones.

“We chose Axon™ Panel Brushed Concrete for the ground floor because of its textured finish and large panel sizes,” says Sally. “With fewer joints required, it helped achieve a clean, sleek look while still providing visual detail.”

The choice of vertically installed Oblique™ Weatherboard for the upper levels emphasises height and creates a bold contrast with the ground floor panels to create a modern and bold aesthetic. Paired with a roof and window frames in a similar colour palette, the overall harmonious result is very satisfying,” says Sally.

One of the most distinctive elements of the development is a curved external wall – a non-standard feature that presented some challenges during construction, but ultimately became the project’s signature design element. The curve was born from a practical need rather than a purely aesthetic one.

“The curved wall was primarily driven by site constraints and functional needs,” explains Sally. “It was designed to accommodate smoother vehicle turning and access, a practical solution that also met driveway dimension requirements and gained council approval. Aesthetics were a benefit, but functionality came first.”

Installing Axon™ Panel Brushed Concrete panels on the curved section was uncharted territory. Sally describes the process:

“From a construction standpoint, installing Axon™ Panel Brushed Concrete on the curved section was a non-standard application with no prior precedents. We worked through it step-by-step, maintaining close communication with James Hardie’s technical team, developing detailed drawings, securing supply channels and working closely with the site foreman to achieve the desired result.”

Frank reflects on the exterior aesthetics with pride. “What an awesome achievement. The curved wall is a real point of difference for this project.”

The proof of the project’s success is in the result. All seven homes sold within two weeks of the Code Compliance Certificate and titles being issued – an outcome that exceeded Foden Living’s expectations.

“The new owners are now moving into their homes and starting the next chapter of their lives. We are thrilled to see this, as it aligns perfectly with Foden Living’s goal of helping first-home buyers secure affordable, high-quality homes,” says Frank.

The buyers reflect the diversity of modern Auckland, with families from a wide range of cultural backgrounds choosing to call Camp Road home. “It’s a wonderful reflection of the Kiwi way of life,” concludes Frank.