

TAN TAT

Brick Inlay delivers a stunning visual dynamic of concerted Jade brick tiles



Tan Tat is a 70th birthday celebration driven by a developer with a difference. Turning a site, purchased 20 years ago as an investment (once home to a car factory) into a family legacy of boutique build to rent apartments.

On Tan Tat, the SJB team has more than delivered.

We could talk about the interior design of the 55 built to rent apartments, or about Tan Tat's various amenities, such as its roof terrace with internal private dining, outdoor BBQ and activity area, the two levels of commercial floor space behind the heritage façade, or the ground floor retail space.

But it's Tan Tat's spectacular façade design that sets this development apart.

It's a visually-dynamic reinterpretation of the existing context, introducing a new level of detail, finesse and historical relevance.

Driven by the existing building fabric, the design celebrates the heritage façade, setting the new addition back to leave the heritage component legible and uncompromised. Embracing SJB's love of experimenting with concrete, and buoyed by the success and learnings from Zero Gipps, Tan Tat uses precast as the building's main architectural feature equally as innovatively.

Prior to the development, Tan Tat was a three-story heritage overlay building. To activate the ground plane on Elizabeth and O'Connell streets, the three levels were retained on those sides. This was no mean feat, as the façade was bordered up and suffering detritus, and multiple layers of paint had to be stripped off the bricks. It was a mammoth clean up task. The demolished bricks were salvaged, cleaned and repurposed in the new construction.

"What we got in the end, was something unexpected because of the different patterns, shapes and sizes of the brick in the original façade. And there was a particular brick that was scored, which is hard to find anywhere in Melbourne now, so we were really happy we could retain it after they cleaned up the façade," Tracy recalls.



Above the heritage podium sits a tower of concertinaed handmade Rairies Montrieux Jade glazed brick tiles, created with a customised Brick Inlay liner. Using a brick tile was an obvious choice for the tower for its robust qualities and minimal maintenance, given it's a build to rent development, but also to speak to, and honour, the heritage brick podium.

Using Brick Inlay to construct the tower was a practical, top of mind choice for SJB:

"As a studio we've experimented a lot with precast – Zero Gipps is a good example; we love our concrete and how we experiment with it. For this site, especially, there were a lot of constraints, like having to retain the heritage façade and limited site access. Brick Inlay is the most robust in terms of precast, so that's what we immediately went to ... We also liked Brick Inlay for its solidity, and the result really speaks for itself and honours the heritage podium façade," Tracy comments.

Early on in the design process, SJB knew that with Brick Inlay you could modulate the panels into six types. But at procurement, Tracy assumed the concertinaed panels would be the first that Capitol Group would value manage, because the tiles are imported and customised panels were needed.

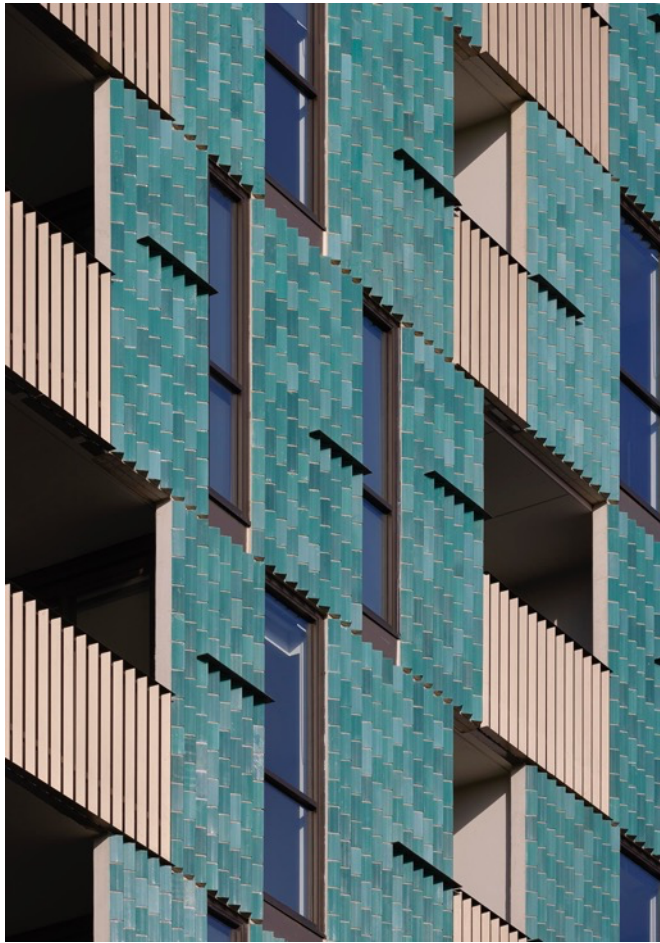
"But when we laid it out for them and told them how we'd do it and explained there would only be six panels and all of the logistics had been worked out through the design process for them, they couldn't say no," Tracy recounts.

The eye-catching concertina of custom Jade glazed brick tiles gives a clear nod to the client's heritage and Chinese ornamental screens, and talks to an interwar moderne and vertical brickwork expression:

"The tiled panels modulate up the building to create a more shifting and dynamic expression, rather than simply having vertically stacked sections. This modulation informs the entire façade creating a more continuous and less fragmented surface," Tracy explains.

A sample of the Jade glazed brick tiles had been sitting around, and regularly admired, at SJB's studio for some time, so when the idea of the concertinaed precast panel arose, using the Jade tile on the upper tower was an instant choice:

"Through the design process we learned the tile is hand glazed, so can be customised to your needs with Robertson's Building Products' help. Robertsons presented 10 different shades of greens and blues, and all



of the bricks have variations, so we picked the darkest and the lightest in the range that we preferred, and Robertson's worked it out from there. The result you see is a beautiful set of variation," Tracy says.

The tower is calming and eye-catching all at once.

"We were trying to promote a design that delivers calmness with everything going on around it. Elizabeth Street is quite busy, so the finely detailed façade treatment respects and gives clarity to the existing building component as well," Tracy remarks.

Bronze powder-coated aluminium balustrades are an additional façade detail, the profile of which precisely follows the concertina of the Jade Brick Inlay panels. Countless hours were spent workshopping this alignment during procurement with the Robertson Façade Systems team to make sure the modular system was the right size, and with Kapitool Group to ensure the bronze metal accurately aligned with the pointed tips of the concertinaed panel.

Absolute precision paid dividends.

The final piece to the delicate facade puzzle is bronze metal strikethroughs in the Brick Inlay panels, giving a slight nod to the building's industrial history as a car factory. This component was glued in afterwards by Melbourne Architectural Precast, adding that striking, next-level detail.

Surrounded by numerous buildings with curtain glazing as the main façade material, Tan Tat is a solid, yet calm and visually-dynamic presence that reinterprets the existing context. Apart from exercising her skills at design innovation, what Tracy enjoyed most throughout this project was working with a developer who had complete faith and trust in his architect from day one.

But perhaps most rewarding of all is standing on the podium level and looking up. It's just breathtaking.

Bravo SJB, you've done it again.

Developer: Tung Development
 Architect: SJB
 Product: Custom Brick Inlay with custom made Rairies Montrieux Jade glazed brick tiles
 Builder: Kapitool Group
 Precaster: Melbourne Architectural Precast
 Photographer: Tom Roe