

FINANCIAL REVIEW

SE **Property**
HD **Melbourne car park sells for \$40m**
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Leigh Seymour, the daughter of Brisbane **property** baron Kevin Seymour, has **sold** a Melbourne car **park** to a private **Chinese** investor for a record \$40 million.

Ms Seymour acquired the nine-level strata title **property** at 300 Flinders Street for \$28.2 million in November 2011. Since then, the facility has been reworked under the Seymours' hand. Returns have increased as the owner replaced the operator, improved the **property** and signed Secure Parking on a 10-year lease.

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"This is an excellent return on equity. It must rank alongside some of the best **property transactions** in the past couple of years," Ms Seymour said.

The **sale** sets a new price per bay of \$69,700, well above the current per-bay rate in Melbourne of around \$50,000.

At that price, the **transaction** brokered by Savills agents Clinton Baxter and Nick Peden represents a sharp 6.07 per cent yield.

"Melbourne's [central business district] car **park** market is an exceptionally tightly held and lucrative market sector, one that is protected by planning policies aimed at minimising the construction of additional car bays within the central CBD," Mr Baxter said.

"Car parks are very appealing to local and offshore investors alike because of the relative ease of management of the asset."

The 574-space above-ground car **park** sits within Victoria University's city campus building.

The university campus component, also on strata title, was **sold** to Singapore-based hospitality player **Hotel** Grand Central for \$48.5 million last year. Car parking jewel

Ms Seymour has become an active investor. Late last year she reclaimed the family's Brisbane car-parking jewel, the McWhirters car **park** in the Fortitude Valley, for about \$40 million.

For Ms Seymour, the Melbourne car **park**'s development potential was limited by its position as a strata **property** within a larger building.

The **transaction** now allows Ms Seymour to focus on her ambition to redevelop the larger McWhirters car **park**. She plans to develop a 20-storey extension above the existing facility, offering 35,000 square metres of office space.

"Fortitude Valley is a growing area. We can add significant value to the **site**," she said.

The Seymour family also owns the Festival Hall car **park** in Brisbane and last year made an unsuccessful attempt to **buy** the Sydney Opera House car **park**.

In 2006, the Seymour **Group sold** the McWhirters car **park** to Lend Lease Core Plus Fund for \$39.75 million.

With wealth estimated at \$580 million by BRW, the family also has a stake in listed **company** Ariadne, which owns car parks in joint venture with Secure Parking.

"We've been in car parks since 1972," Kevin Seymour said last year. "We've made a lot of money out of parking over the past 40 years. They are a great asset class for us. There's no maintenance or supervision or repairs. It's just a good, solid asset class, which is trouble-free."

IN i5020008 : Parking Lot Construction | ireest : Real Estate | i502 : Heavy Construction | iconst : Construction | icre : Real Estate/Construction

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