



PHOTOGRAPHER: **JEFF KILPATRICK** PRODUCER: **BABETTE HAYES**

WALLS ARE OPTIONAL IN A SEAMLESS SPACE
CREATED FROM A WAREHOUSE SHELL. METAL
FINISHES AND RAW CONCRETE ENSURE THAT



Raw textures have been preserved to maintain the original character of the former factory space. Concrete ceilings, lightly sandblasted, and besser block walls are softened by recycled blackbutt timber floors and slabs of colour. The wall beside the dining area is painted in Murowash 'Pomegranate'; on it hangs a work by Melbourne painter Greg Mallyon. Other walls are in Dulux 'Pale Stone'. The wardrobes on wheels, designed by Centrum Architects, can be moved to screen the bedroom from the living area. A garage roller-door conceals the bathroom when required, and above is a storage loft-cum-fourth bedroom. Building work by Martin Strode of ESMA Projects, Prahran.

COMFORT HAS AN URBAN

EDGE





The desire for a radical transformation of lifestyle led Melbourne's Chris Boag to move from a modern family home to a spartan, contemporary woolshed with open-plan living. He searched for three months, hunting for an unusual industrial space to convert, and found it in the suburb of Brunswick in a building formerly referred to as The Fashion Warehouse, which was being sold as a series of empty shells. High ceilings, the ruggedness of the building's raw structure and an outlook over trees and church steeples all appealed to Boag.

He commissioned Ken Charles, a friend from university days who runs Centrum Architects with fellow architect Geoff Lavender, to design the fit-out. Boag had written a five-page question-and-answer-style brief to identify his requirements, pinpoint potential areas of concern, and list preferences, which included the need to accommodate his children on weekends.

"It was such an open yet direct brief," Charles says. "Chris wanted something strong, raw and warm, with the look of an urban woolshed. He loved the use of old timbers and steel, and wanted us to express fully the rawness of the original structure." It had to be minimal, sculptural but not clinical, clean-lined and functional, with an emphasis on wood, texture and warmth, and with angles rather than curves.

"I told him that nothing would shock me," says Boag, who instructed Charles that if he had two possible options in mind for

The entry corridor, *opposite, top left*, viewed from the front door. Geoffrey Mance Architectural Lighting lit the windowless space with Kreon 'Side' lights set low into the wall and an upright recessed into the floor.

Top right: reverse view. The orange walls house the pantry. *Bottom*: a roller-door conceals the bathroom; the galvanised iron panel above it screens the mezzanine, which doubles as storage and a children's sleeping loft. *This page*: the long kitchen bench, custom-built by Richmond Handcrafted Furniture, Richmond, forms a sideboard at the dining end. Dining table by Simply Broome, Broome, WA; chairs by Xen Kallas New Look Design, Elwood.



With the roller-door open, above, the bather enjoys a framed view of the dining area. The bath hob was given a Galmet hammered finish in bronze; taps by Grohe. Opposite, top: Ken Charles (left) and partner Geoff Lavender of Centrum Architects. Bottom: microwave, kitchen appliances, foodstuffs and storage are concealed within the central walk-in, work-in pantry. Walls stop short of the ceiling to retain an open feeling; Victorian ash veneer shelves and cabinets team with polished concrete benchtops.

any particular element or finish, he was to “take the less slick solution – to err on the side of grunge”.

“It’s the sort of brief that really motivates me,” Charles says. “It allows for more diversity of materials and finishes.” From the first presentation, it was clear the Centrum architects were in tune with Boag. He didn’t change one detail.

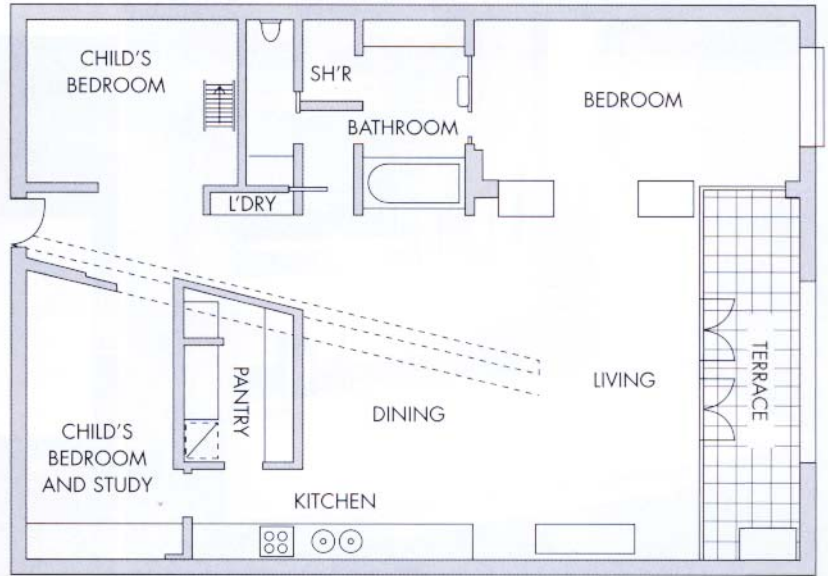
Potentially, the space – a 138-square-metre open shell with besser block walls, and concrete floors and ceilings – had a beautiful urban texture and immense opportunity for individual expression. Charles devised a dramatic open entry that captures the industrial essence of the original structure, using an angled wall with a soaring steel beam extending over the dining zone.

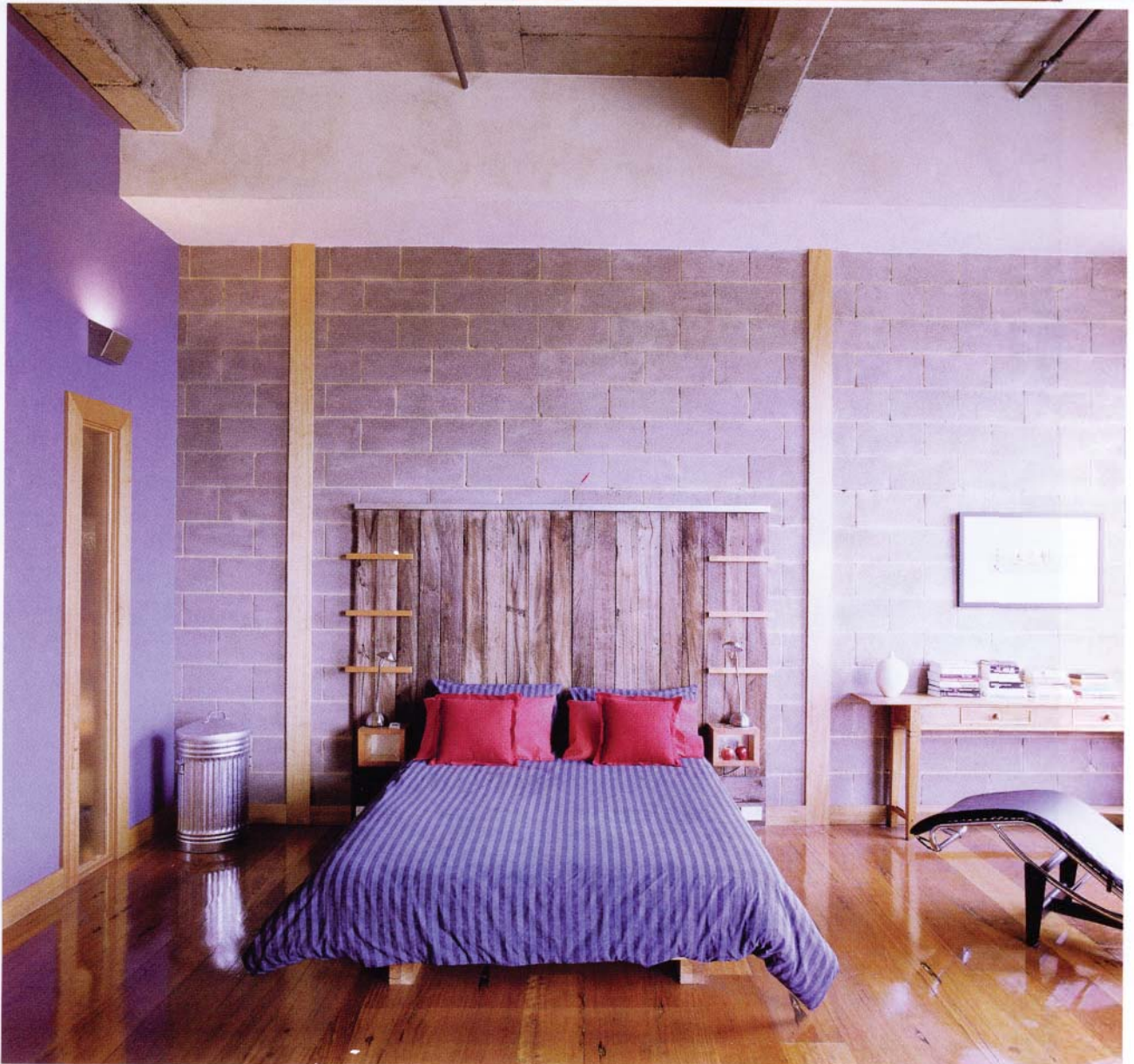
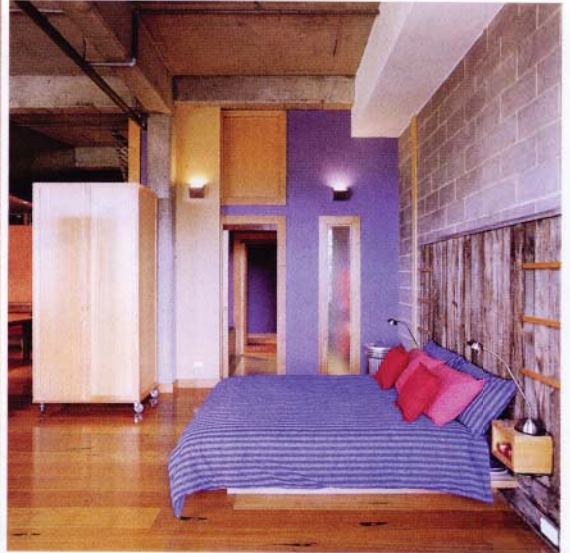
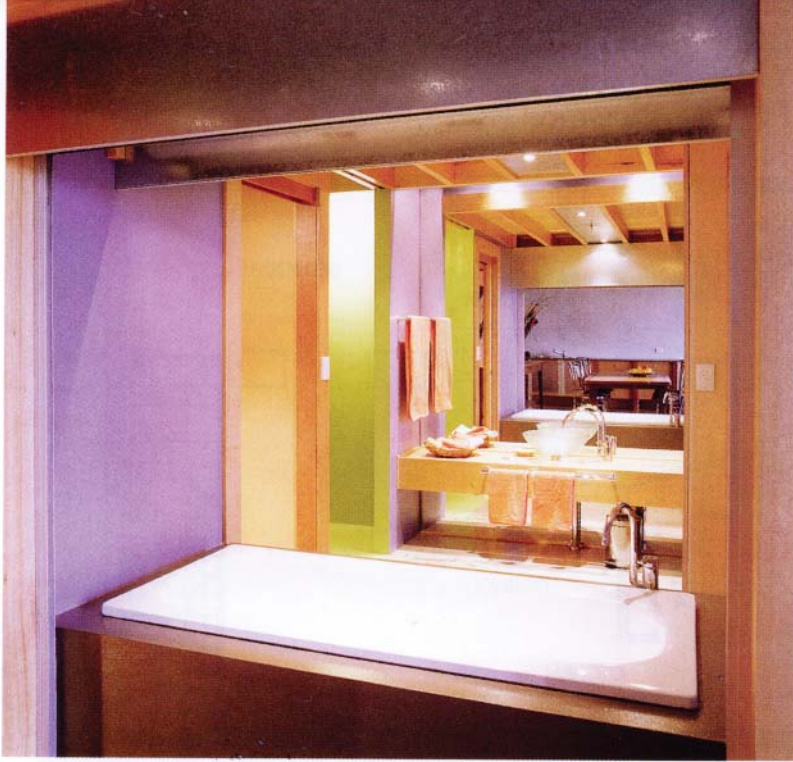
“The angled wall was one of the main design generators,” Charles says. “We had to expand and broaden the space as much as possible, bringing the living room down to the entry. The entry is not a conventional corridor with rooms at one end, it’s like a woolshed with its unashamed use of materials – galvanised iron panelling and exposed fixings – and definition of form.”

The apartment is divided into two zones. At the windowless, entry end, on either side of the front door, are the children’s bedrooms, one of which doubles as a home office. Living, dining, cooking and the main bedroom are all jigsawed into the remaining open space, according to the interactive living concept that Boag had in mind.

A long cabinet built against the boundary wall runs from the larger of the two children’s rooms, where it provides storage

STORAGE AND
SLEEPING LOFT SITS
OVER THE BATHROOM







space, to the kitchen, where it houses an integrated oven, cooktop, sink and dishwasher, and on to the dining area, where it serves as a sideboard. The central pantry, enclosed by walls that stop short of the ceiling, also serves as a small galley kitchen, where microwave, toaster, espresso machine and kitchen activities, such as washing up and food preparation, are hidden from view.

Opposite the dining area, a garage roller-door conceals the bathroom, which can be either completely opened up to the living room or closed off. With the door left open, the bather can enjoy the natural light. When the door is closed, the bathroom becomes a secluded, colour-filled haven.

Above the bathroom is a sleeping/storage loft, reached by a staircase leading from the smaller of the children's bedrooms. The loft overlooks the living room and provides tree-filled, rooftop views beyond the terrace.

Beside the bathroom is the main bedroom, open to the living area and adjoining the terrace at the far end of the apartment. A pair of giant mobile wardrobes can be wheeled into position to screen off the bedroom as required.

The lighting scheme by Geoffrey Mance highlights the dramatic contrast between the raw building materials used as finishes and the architectural forms to which they are applied. It also sets a variety of moods in the windowless entry area.

Boag says that he revelled in discovering the details and finishes that Charles had created. "I told him to treat it as his own – you can't be too radical."

BABETTE HAYES

With the bathroom's roller-door raised, opposite, top left, the vanity and bathtub are open to the living space. Top right and bottom: the industrial mood continues in the bedroom, with its weathered timber bedhead, metal bin and light fittings. This page: the bathroom's polished concrete floor is painted Luxapool 'Brooke Green' in the shower, as are the shower walls. Set into the Victorian ash vanity are a Neo-deep glass wash vessel and Euroeco mixer with swivel spout. Bathroom walls in Dulux 'Empire'. The lavatory is to the left, behind the shower.