

PROPERTY

BOHEMIAN FANTASIES

Warehouse-living seems trendy. But regulations and a conservative market mean audacious design potential is rarely realised, writes JENNIFER STYNES.

ILVING in warehouses has been fashionable for ages in cities like New York, first with artists, and then stockbrokers, trying to make themselves just that touch bohemian when they let their ponytails down. And of course, at the less sophisticated end of the market, night-watchmen had the opportunity to live in such exotic locales for years before Wall Street ever heard of them.

Warehouse living in Australia is a more recent phenomenon but has taken off in a big way in recent years with the trendier among us. Perhaps not quite as trendy as they would have us believe, though, since the interiors of many converted warehouses are undistinguishable from your average modern home unit. In some cases, you'd be forgiven for thinking you'd walked into a renovated terrace, so familiar are the layout and furnishings.

The most popular area for such projects is the inner city, particularly in Redfern and Chippendale, where buildings suitable for conversion were erected more than 70 years ago. Many have become available as the owners decide purpose-built factories and warehouses on the outskirts of the city offer greater space and efficiency and better parking facilities.

However, the inner-city stock has begun to dry up, as warehouse owners realise the value of their properties and become aware of the strong competition among developers to acquire them, a situation that will cause prices to soar even higher.

If warehouse conversions for multiple units don't always meet expectations, one can't necessarily blame the developer, according to Michael Williams of MWI Property Pty Ltd who, in conjunction with Grant Samuel, is involved in a major project in Chippendale.

"Because of regulations, developers have built brand-new buildings that retain just the facade of the warehouse. Inside, it's just like any other apartment with low ceilings – it could be a conventional home unit," said Williams.

No matter how sympathetic the developers, they have to put in insulation and take into account the sound rating plus other factors. "In the end, because it's prohibitive cost-wise, they knock down the old building and put up a new one," said Williams. Then there are council regulations. "Each council has its own idiosyncrasies, but generally the building department and the planning department are separate."

Representatives from both departments are present at early development



Inner-city adventure: Aerial view of the Chippendale conversion, where buyers are finding alternative bliss.

application meetings and that's often as far as the information flow goes, even when the council in question is well disposed towards warehouse conversions. Even more confusing, some of the regulations for each department are actually contradictory. No-one said making money was supposed to be straightforward.

Most warehouses fall within the jurisdiction of South Sydney Council, from which 11 phone calls elicited a fairly brief response. A spokeswoman for the council said that warehouse redevelopment was increasing, particularly in Chippendale.

"There are no formal differences between converting a warehouse and an ordinary building application unless there are heritage aspects and then it becomes subject to other regulations.

"Council does encourage adaptive reuse and conservation of buildings. Parking is a big consideration, with

implications for the other residents of the area."

If warehouse conversions continue at the current rate, she said, there might be some case for having a separate set of development application rules in the future.

So what's the drawback of living in a warehouse? "People come, in the first place, because of the novelty of warehouses – they're more individual and offer more floor space," said architect Andre Porebski. "They want to live in more adventurous surroundings. Buyers are prepared to accept a building with less glitz attached to it – they don't expect a place with cornices, panelled walls and polished timber floors. They can dress up the flat with far more freedom."

The freedom doesn't extend to the basics, though, said Michael Williams. "In Australia, councils haven't caught up with the idea, really.

For instance, they still expect you to provide a separate laundry tub. In this case, Caroma has come up with a laundry tub that doubles up handsomely as a bathroom washbasin."

Maybe the market has yet to catch up too. In MWI's earlier project in East Sydney, purchasers were given choices that proved just a bit too radical for most of them. "Most people," said Michael Williams, "wanted a kitchen and a bathroom – they even wanted storage."

"It's very hard to change people's perception of what comfort is," said Porebski. "You've got to have a kitchen and traditional services. I'm not saying this is in only Sydney, Australia – it's in America, too. But if you go into a smart hotel in Europe, for instance, they wouldn't have vanities in the bathrooms. The appliances used here for washing and cleaning can become smaller, so that a bathroom can become a proper room."

Source : The Sydney Morning Herald
Domain (5June 1997 p19)



Transformation: Moorgate in Chippendale will have 37 flats and four terraces

Where's a house? Try an inner-city warehouse

WITH Chippendale the latest residential hot spot, a new development there should have buyers racing to take advantage of an inspired Andre Porebski-designed warehouse conversion.

A combination of large warehouse apartments and terraces in a building bordering three quiet, tree-lined streets, they are expected to sell from \$205,000 to around \$450,000.

The 82m complex, Moorgate, will be transformed into a three-storey residential building offering a mix of 37 one, two and three-bedroom apartments and four terrace houses.

Even the one bedroom apartments have 5m ceilings to incorporate loft-style sleeping quarters.

Each apartment has a balcony or an outside area, with great views of the city skyline from the top floor.

Renowned colour consultant Virginia Carroll has prepared a choice of three colour schemes which blend in with the style of the building.

The original facade of the building will be retained including a number of distinctive arched windows.

Parking is provided on the ground floor and apartments are grouped around three separate lobbies.

Moorgate is being developed by Grant Samuel Property Services and MWI Property.

Selling agents are Shields of Newtown and out of 41 spots on offer, 10 are already reserved.

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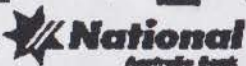
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AFTER just two weeks of marketing, more than half the apartments and one terrace house have already sold off the plan for Moorgate, a new warehouse con-

version in the inner city suburb of Chippendale.

The success of the development, designed by award-winning architect Andre Porebski, has been attributed to great value for money, its superb location and the abundance of space in every unit. Even the one-bedroom apartments have five-metre ceilings.

Marketing agent Peter Shields is delighted. "Buyers have been particularly impressed by the space which Andre has cre-

ated," he said.

"The price is very attractive. Apartments are priced from \$209,000 for a one-bedroom loft apartment to \$450,000 for a 200 square metre three-level terrace. Moorgate is very affordable."

There is also the variety of design of the various units and houses and the extremely quiet location of the building bordering three tree-lined Chippendale streets — so close to the city and only minutes from the rebur-

bished Grace Bros retail project on Broadway due for completion in 1998.

Andre Porebski is renowned for his innovative warehouse conversions.

He has used galvanised steel for the stairways, polished concrete floors, finished blockwork for inter-unit walls and treated corrugated iron ceilings with timber roof trusses for the top floor apartments. The result is an original and unique industrial feel.

The Moorgate

project offers a mix of 37 one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments, and four terrace houses. Every apartment and terrace has a balcony and/or outside area.

Unlike many warehouses which are demolished for residential development, the facade of this 82-metre long warehouse is being retained, including a number of distinctive arched windows.

There is a generosity of space throughout. The two-bedroom apartments cover 129 square me-

tres, which is much larger than most typical two-bedroom units in inner city developments. The four terrace houses facing Daniels Street would also lend themselves to commercial use.

Moorgate is being developed by Grant Samuel Property Services and MWI Property on behalf of clients. The anticipated completion date is June 1998.

Enquiries can be made to the sole marketing agent, Shields of Newtown, phone 9550 1333, fax 9550 2159.

Real Estate

Moorgate is selling strong

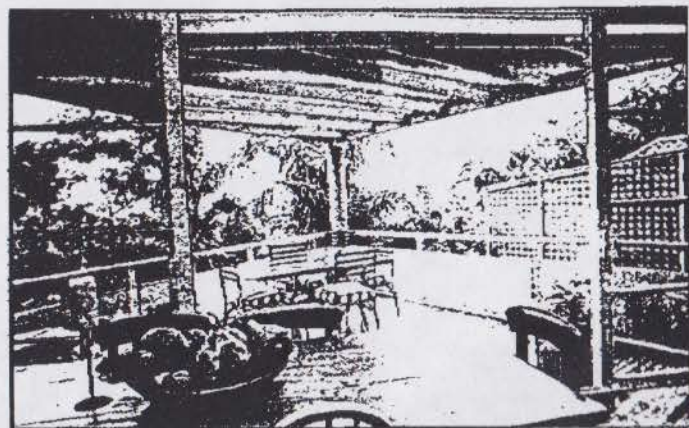
Freestanding Federation home

IN A quiet street, seconds from Queens Park, offering city skyline and district views, this freestanding Federation home boasting contemporary renovations by architect Craig Merideth and is listed for auction with James Dack of McGrath Partners.

The residence comprises four bedrooms (master suite includes

a sitting area, marble ensuite, dressing rooms and balcony), three modern bathrooms, formal living and dining rooms, wide open-plan family and entertaining areas flowing to a rear deck with 180-degree views, a sitting room and a kitchen with European appliances.

Other comforts include a rear courtyard and private forecourt sporting European influences, potential off-street parking, ample storage, polished timber floors, three fire-



walls of glass.
The property at 55 Burke Street,

will be auctioned on-site at 12.45 pm on Saturday, June 14. Inspect

and Saturday 12.15-1 pm. Call James Dack on 9361 9344 or 0411

First Pacific Davies

Source : The Sydney Morning Herald

Developers wrap the Cristo in chic

By JONATHAN CHANCELLOR
Property Editor

THE Cristo on Corben Street, Surry Hills, is the latest in chic apartment developments, put together by vogue builder Dr Ron White and and designers Barry and Christine Elsbury.

Some of the apartments, which range from 86 to 114 sq m, have a flexible split level design and others a second outdoor terrace. They are priced between \$360,000 and \$495,000.

Interiors were lit with halogen lighting on stainless steep trapeze wires, said Cristo marketing agent Ms Di Jones. Each unit has video and back-to-base security. Data-quality cabling is also evident. Natural lighting has been skillfully maximised. The kitchens feature stainless-steel benchtops and SMEG appliances. Floors range from blackbutt and brushbox timber plank to Marfkin parquet and imported sisal carpets. Outdoor terraces have handmade terracotta tiles.

In Chippendale, the Andre Porebski-designed warehouse conversion, Moorgate, is the latest residential property hot spot, with an anticipated completion date of June 1998. Even those units with one bedroom offer five-metre ceiling heights.



Drummoyne ... up to \$1.6 million.

Prices range from \$205,000 to about \$450,000. Half of the 41 apartments have been sold.

Colour has an important role in these new developments. At Moorgate, colour consultant Virginia Carroll has prepared a choice of three colour schemes. Moorgate is being developed by Grant Samuel Property Services and MWI Property on behalf of clients.

In Drummoyne, on the St Georges Crescent waterfront, developer Nati Stoliar has

released six apartments with prices ranging from \$1.3 to \$1.6 million. Laing & Simmons Double Bay marketing agent Mr Alain Waitsman said the Nautilus apartments were years ahead of anything built alongside.

Before Cristo, Dr White developed six luxury villas overlooking Cooper Park in View Street, Woollahra, that were completed and sold in 1994. He also undertook the Milton Park, Bowral, villas.

But he and restaurateur Mr Damien Pignolet have decided to concentrate on their existing hotels, the Woollahra Hotel and Balmain's Sackville Hotel.

During the week, they sold the gutted Clock Hotel site in Crown Street, Surry Hills, for \$2.8 million to hotel operator Mr Maurice Green, with his son, Tony, and son-in-law Mr John Tierney.

The family syndicate beat off six rival publicans, including Mr Barry Wain, at the auction through Knight Frank selling agent Mr Mike Wheatley.

The 600 sq m hotel site traded at \$1.6 million in March last year as part of a bigger syndicate headed by ad man Michael Magnus, which bought the remainder of the inner-city block for \$3.08 million from the Jury Group.

Continued next page



The Cristo on Corben Street, Surry Hills ... natural lighting skillfully maximised.