

# Loft APARTMENT by Adrian Amore Architects

• MELBOURNE, VIC •

Intuitively designed, the sweeping curves and deft geometry of this apartment renovation continue to surprise and delight its owners.

Words by Peter Davies  
Photography by Fraser Marsden

**W**hen architect Adrian Amore describes this elegant warehouse conversion, it is his hands that really explain his design approach. While he talks, his hands are busily tweaking, pinching, pulling and sculpting, a set of gestures and movements that perfectly demonstrate the process by which he has composed the dynamic spaces and forms.

Perhaps the best example is the sinuous, ribbon-like stair that sweeps around and up, pausing for a moment at the first floor before turning sharply and rising to the roof deck. It is right at home in this crisp white space and simultaneously "other," startlingly different from the workaday "industrial" elements you might find in many similar projects.

You can see Adrian's tactile approach in the carefully sculpted angles of the "pod" that houses the downstairs bathroom and laundry. Here, uniform right angles have been pinched and tweaked into an almost organic quadrilateral shape. This particular solution works with the placement of the existing windows and creates a flow through the space, rather than being designed merely for aesthetics.

This idea of movement is central to the architect's description of the project. Adrian talks about the idea of permeability through the space, the creation of connections, voids, room for movement. The complex interconnections between the spaces - both between each room and throughout the entire volume - demonstrate a very considered manipulation.

01 The idea of movement is integral to the design of this three-bedroom apartment, as epitomized by the striking, ribbon-like form of the staircase that takes centre stage.



02 The spare colour palette and pared-back materials allow the dramatic forms of the architecture to come to the fore.

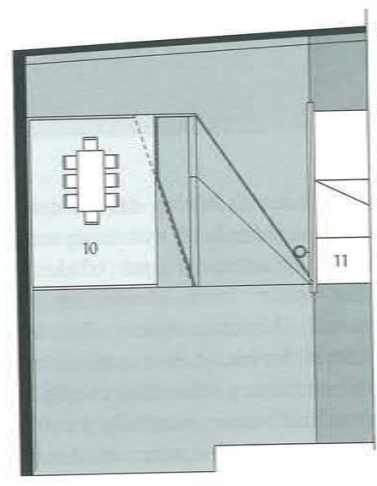
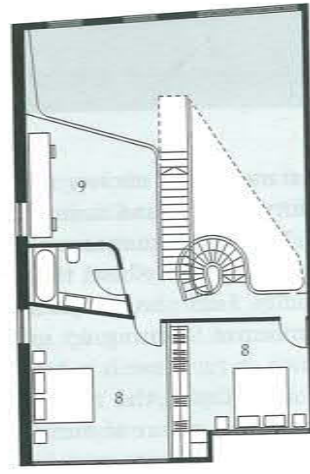
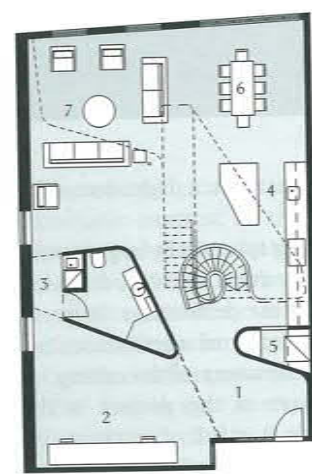


The sweeping curves and deft geometry of the renovation are a dramatic contrast to the project's original incarnation as the Western Star butter factory. Located just a stone's throw from Melbourne's CBD in West Melbourne, the factory was converted into apartments in the nineties. Having owned the property since that time, the owners toyed with selling it but decided instead to look at renovation options. The final design is responsive and clever, driven by intuition and, as Adrian puts it, a dialogue with the space rather than any preordained "concept." If anything, he explains, it started with the design solution and the concept evolved from there. One of the main challenges of the original scheme was a heavy metal truss that sliced through the space. It was structurally significant, but difficult to work around. Adrian developed a range of schemes with the truss in place, but none seemed to really

capitalize on the potential of the space. After some persuading the client agreed to consider removing the truss, and this decision opened up a range of possibilities to completely reconfigure the internal volume. The brief called for a three-bedroom home and the addition of a roof deck. Since the original conversion from factory to apartment, each of the neighbouring apartments had been built up onto the roof. The title for this property also included provision for a roof deck, though it had never been realized. Throughout the project, the architect has demonstrated an impressive restraint when it comes to the refined colour palette and pared-back materials, allowing the dramatic forms – the sweeping stair, the folding ceiling, the sculpted balustrades and curving walls – to retain centre stage. The lean, linear kitchen is made up of two furniture-like

elements. In lieu of overhead cupboards, Adrian designed a long shelf above the Carrara marble splashback. It was designed as a home for the occupants' personal artefacts and trinkets, an opportunity to transform the space from something purely functional into a more personal, domestic space. The second element is the quadrilateral island bench. It is a curious mix of light and solid, the weight of its marble top offsetting the lightness of the structure itself. One corner folds down playfully, a reference to the crafted shapes evident in the rest of the apartment. A sculpted pantry is enclosed alongside the stair, separating the kitchen from the entry. The same materials are put to good use in the two bathrooms. In the ground-floor bathroom, a shower is tucked into a curving corner. As the vertical tiles reach this apex, they appear to narrow and accelerate, a neat visual trick. In the upstairs bathroom,

Carrara marble encases the bath and acts as a light but solid vanity with a round basin. The living/dining zone is a light and airy space, lit by large north-facing windows. Above, the ceiling curves and rises with dramatic fluidity. From this perspective, the staircase performs a different manoeuvre, twisting up into the balustrade of the mezzanine, which, in turn, swells in height to meet the sweep of the ceiling. For Adrian, the most satisfying part of the project is the unexpected nature of the central volume. It is full of intrigue and every vantage point provokes a pause, a recalibration of how you think the forms work together. Adrian speaks with delight about how he is still discovering new angles, new perspectives, as each plane intersects in unexpected ways. And that is, perhaps, the sign of a truly successful project – one that continues to surprise both its maker and its inhabitants. [E]

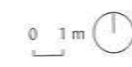


- 1 Entry
- 2 Studio/bedroom
- 3 Laundry
- 4 Kitchen
- 5 Pantry
- 6 Dining
- 7 Living
- 8 Bedroom
- 9 Studio/play
- 10 Roof terrace
- 11 Adjoining apartment

Ground floor 1:250

First floor 1:250

Roof 1:250



- 03 In lieu of overhead cupboards, the linear kitchen features a long shelf for displaying personal artefacts.
- 04 The sweeping curves of the renovation are a dramatic contrast to the project's original incarnation as a butter factory.
- 05 The vertical tiles of the bathroom narrow as they reach the curving corner of the bathroom, enhancing the space's dynamic shape.
- 06 Connections between the two interior levels are maintained, with the study on the first floor providing openings to views of the lower level.

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**Practice profile**  
 A small practice focusing on residential projects and retail design.

**Project team**  
 Adrian Amore

**Builder**  
 DM Urban

**Consultants**  
**Engineer:** Maurice Farrugia and Associates

**Products**  
**Roofing:** Lysaght Custom Orb sheeting; R5.0 Bradford Gold insulation batts  
**External walls:** Fielders Nailstrip panelling in Colorbond 'Monument'  
**Internal walls:** Gyprock plasterboard in Wattyl 'Chalkdust'  
**Doors:** Centor sliding door tracks  
**Flooring:** Concrete finished in white tint and clear satin  
**Lighting:** Artemide Surf Halo 300 wall-mounted uplights and Rastaf 86 recessed downlights; Reggiani Sunny Lights on suspended track from Euro luce

**Kitchen:** AFA Vertus 745 undermount sink; Dorf Jovian pull-down mixer; stainless steel and honed Carrara stone benchtop from CDK Stone; joinery from A Line Joinery in Wattyl 'Chalkdust' 2-pac satin finish; stained blackbutt timber  
**Bathroom:** Rogerseller Tonic mixer; honed Carrara marble vanity bench; Classic Ceramics wall tiles and unglazed hexagonal floor tiles; Ideal Standard white range sink  
**Other:** Furniture supplied by Space Furniture

**Floor area**  
 133 m<sup>2</sup> site  
 214 m<sup>2</sup> floor  
 24 m<sup>2</sup> roof terrace

**Time schedule**  
**Design, documentation:**  
 6 months





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**Practice profile**  
Adrian Amore Architects is a small, Melbourne-based practice that creates architecture through a rigorous design process using ingenuity, invention and craft. In its work, poetics of form are equally as important as function, both working symbiotically.

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