

INTERIORS



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was still full of old lathes and machinery and there wasn't a lot of architecture in the subdivision," he says. "We've re-used as much of the building as possible to keep the character of the warehouse."

The painted walls were sandblasted back to the original red brick, the original corrugated roof was retained as was the ceiling with a new roof and insulation installed over it and the timber trusses and concrete floor were also kept intact. "I got on a concrete grinder one weekend," Littlefield says, "and cut it back as much as possible just to get rid of the grease, and then put an epoxy resin over the top. I shook for about a week after doing that."

To avoid punching additional windows into the walls, which would have changed the external appearance, he removed a quarter of the roof and installed two outdoor decks on the upper level, sending natural light and ventilation into the core.

Prices for warehouses in Fitzroy have boomed along with the rest of the residential market in that suburb, but Littlefield says that as he did a lot of the construction work himself he's managed to factor a fair bit of capital into the project. He bought the apartment for \$325,000 and spent just over \$200,000 on the fitout. As it stands today, he says, it carries a bank valuation of about \$750,000.

Littlefield has kept the original loading dock entry door as a garage door, which opens directly into the main living space of the apartment. The sight of his car parked just behind the sofa, he says, never fails to surprise guests.

Littlefield lives in the 210-square-metre apartment with his partner and one-year-old child. He says the next stage of the project will be to extend up and build a parent's retreat.

Bringing light to the industrial floor

Previous experience proved invaluable in this stylish warehouse conversion, writes **David Meagher**.

For some people, it must seem like a good idea at the time – buying a disused warehouse on the cheap, doing it up and turning it into a home. The only problem is that warehouses are not designed for living in, and getting natural light into the centre of the structure is just one problem the new occupant faces.

It was also one that Justin Littlefield was acutely aware of. A partner in Melbourne-based firm of architects ClarkeHopkinsClarke which has been involved in several residential warehouse conversions, he was able to bring that experience to bear on his own residence.

Not only was he the owner and architect on this project, he also



The architect owner of this converted warehouse in Melbourne has preserved much of its original character. Photos above show the finished renovation; at left, before work began.

did a large part of the building work. "I always had in mind that I'd have a go at a fair bit of it, but get a builder in for the main structural component," he says. He bought the building – a former water purification warehouse and then the Rex Engineering building in Fitzroy – three years ago and spent nine months turning it into a habitable home.

It had already been subdivided into two lots, but that was about it. "When we bought it, the building

Clarke
Hopkins
Clarke

Clarke Hopkins Clarke
Architects

366 Nicholson Street
Fitzroy Victoria Australia 3065
Telephone (03) 9419 4340
Facsimile (03) 9419 4345
Email studio@chc.com.au
www.chc.com.au