

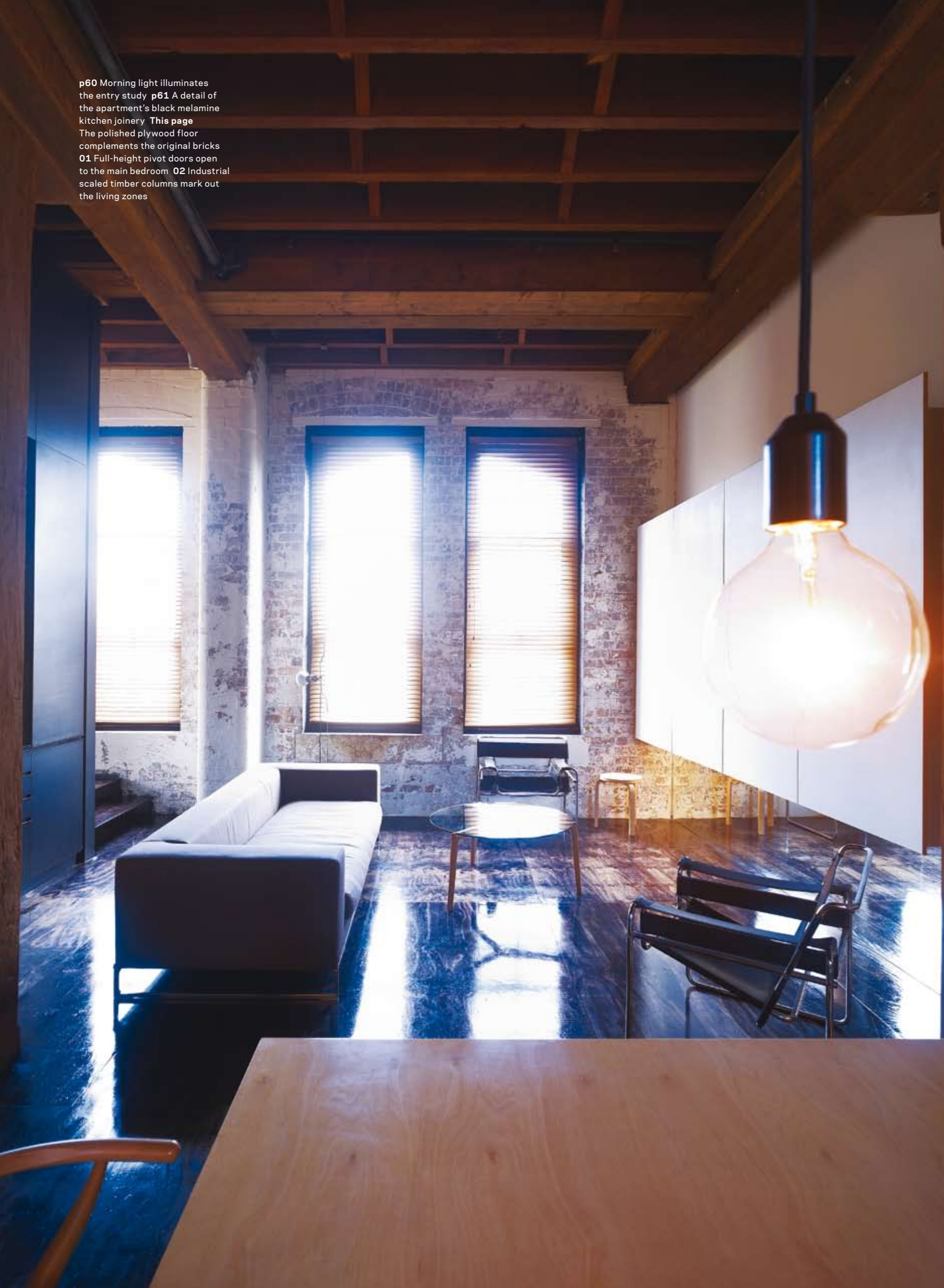


Architect Eva-Marie Prineas creates inky reflective pools in the black and white refit of a Sydney inner city warehouse conversion.

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ARCHITECT PRINEAS DARLINGTON APARTMENT

p60 Morning light illuminates the entry study p61 A detail of the apartment's black melamine kitchen joinery This page The polished plywood floor complements the original bricks 01 Full-height pivot doors open to the main bedroom 02 Industrial scaled timber columns mark out the living zones



The Foundry, located in Sydney's Darlington Heritage Conservation Area, was originally built in the 1880s. It is also one of the city's earlier 'developed' warehouses and a series of owners have left their imprint on its domestic conversions.

Architects Eva-Marie Prineas and Peter Titmuss returned to the building's essential structure, using a monochromatic palette in their refit of this two-bedroom inner city apartment.

On entering the transom-topped door to the third-floor apartment, the visitor is struck by the shafts of light that fall into a long cathedral-like space from a pair of windows on the far wall. The height of the room soars to the exposed beam ceiling, with the natural light brilliantly reflected in a high-gloss black floor.

Composed of large black-stained sheets of plywood, the floor's wood grain creates the illusion of inky pools and of another dimension. "We wouldn't normally do a floor this glossy but the light furniture seems to float on the dark reflective floor," Prineas says. This effect is further enhanced by mirrors meeting the floor and disappearing under the large storage units hung at knee height on the apartment's only common wall.

While the eye falls for the illusion of infinity beyond the common wall, the mirror splashback on the opposite black wall – that forms the kitchen and divides the living area from bedrooms, bathrooms and laundry – simply reflects. Its solidity, reduced momentarily by the mirror's block shape, does not retreat from the room. The architects don't usually use dark colours but took an experimental punt with this apartment. "We played with the idea that the mirrors and dark colours help the walls to recede in the space, making it seem large," she says. On the contrary, the white storage units and the black divider on either side of the living area set up a chiaroscuro echoed by the black window reveals and the light behind them.

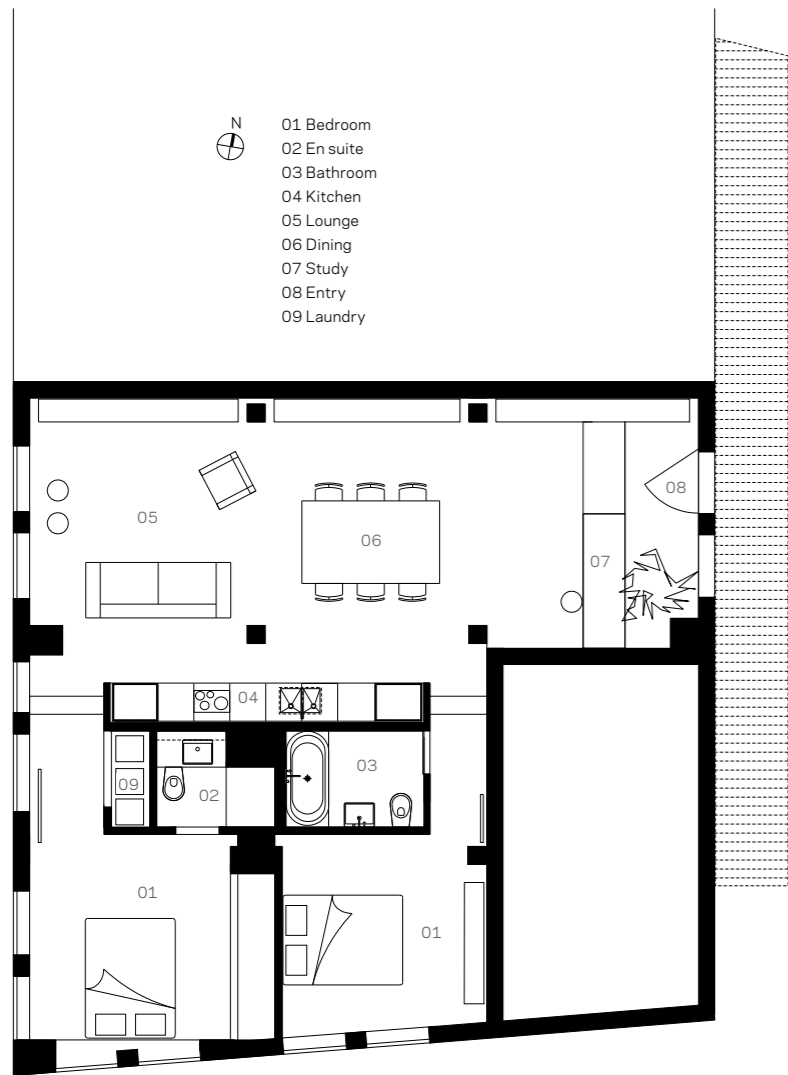
The previous owner's interior fit-out was stripped out, replacing it with the architects own return-to-origin style. This involved taking out an internal balcony and all the trims that indicate domestic scale, such as skirtings, architraves and dividing walls. "We consolidated all the rooms into one element, the black pod, and made it a full-sized object rather than a series of walls," Prineas says.

This strategy works particularly well in defining the entrances to the two bedrooms at either end of the pod. A sheet of pale MDF fills both spaces completely and when one grips the concealed vertical rail that functions as a handle, the whole thing pivots, forming a door that almost disappears when opened.

Illuminated by a pair of windows, the brooding floor is again the star in the main corner bedroom. The low-lying bed apparently hovers above it and lifts the notion of sleep into a cloudy, dream-like stratosphere. The bed itself and the curved edges of the pillars with their earthy tones of mottled painted brick reintroduce the softer textures of the furnishings.

In the bathrooms the architects trialled a new material, Kerlite, a glass and stone composite in sheets, which they used to conceal existing surfaces and plumbing, creating a completely new look with minimal cost or fuss.

Warehouse conversions seem to elicit a contrast in how designers and architects respond to them: domesticate the space or unleash industria. In refitting this apartment in a heritage industrial building, Prineas says she thinks the end result feels like, "We haven't made any interventions at all". **M**



ARCHITECT STATEMENT "Our intent for this project is to create an economical interior complementing the remarkable materiality, scale and spatial qualities of the original industrial container. The project eschews the domestic in favour of the scale of the original building. Its oversized structural grid of Oregon columns and beams provide the cue for different interior settings. The service rooms are pulled away from the perimeter and consolidated into a central pod consisting of galley kitchen, bathroom, en suite and laundry. By doing this the scale of the monolithic pod sits comfortably with the scale of the original building. This single element sets the planning, dividing private from public and service from served. Old and new flooring have been stained to provide a consistent finish. In the living areas large plywood sheets provide an economical flooring glued directly to an acoustic substrate. Sanded, stained and polished, the sheets take on a new materiality. Plywood is similarly used to extend the floor as stairs and benches. The full height pivot doors, handles and mirrors serve to extend the reading of the space."

Eva-Marie Prineas
ARCHITECT Architect Prineas **PROJECT TEAM** Eva-Marie Prineas, Peter Titmuss
BUILDER Wayd Munro of Focusbuild, and owners
See p114 for HIGHLIGHTED MATERIALS & FINISHES



03 The kitchen area is inserted between the timber columns
Opposite page Three distinct timber hues are used to articulate the existing structure, floor and furniture

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