

This page The narrow, tall arched doorway from a guest bedroom into the living area accentuates the verticality of the space. Gaetano Pesce's 'Up Series 2000' chair. Nanimarquina 'Rabari' rug. Opposite page Adam's rooftop apartment and upper-level garden partly seen from the communal garden in the foreground.

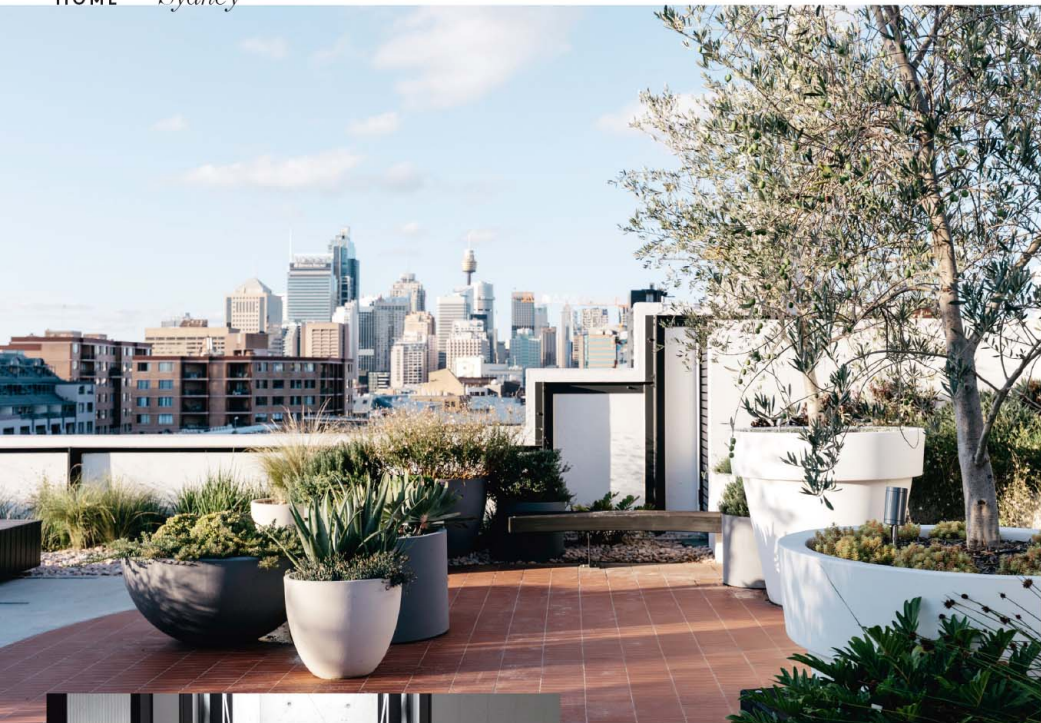


ROOM AT THE TOP

A penthouse apartment with a lush sky-high garden is an oasis in the city for its owner and a magnet for fly-by birdlife.

Photographs FELIX FOREST Words JEAN WRIGHT





It's not often the opportunity arises in Sydney to create a rooftop apartment just a few kilometres from the CBD that boasts spectacular wrap-around views from the city to the Blue Mountains. So when the top-floor space of the Demco Machinery Company building in Redfern came on the market, architect Adam Haddow of SJB was in the perfect position to purchase it.

SJB had been commissioned for an adaptive re-use project, converting the heritage-listed 1938 building into 39 residential apartments, and Adam was the lead architect. With interiors designed by BKH, the redevelopment included a new (un-built) rooftop structure spanning the original goods lift enclosure and overrun, now a master bedroom, bathroom and study, and the emergency fire stairs, now one of the guest bedrooms.

Adam was keen to 'do his own thing' in creating the penthouse and its garden which would adjoin a planned communal rooftop terrace designed by Black Beetle. The developer's only proviso was that it would not cost – either in time or money.

The 150-square-metre apartment that Adam subsequently created and now shares with his husband is distinctly personal. "It's full of little moments that you get joy out of every day," he says. There is a sense of discovery and not everything is on view immediately.

Stepping out of the lift into the entry lobby, you encounter an Anna-Wili Highfield sculpture of black cockatoos in flight, positioned below a skylight, linking it to the outdoors and creating a sense of drama. It's a small, contained space with an emphasis on verticality – a theme that continues throughout the apartment, with the bedrooms intimate in size and atmosphere.



This page The living room floors are American oak with a smoky finish from Precision Flooring. Gastano Pesce's 'Up Series 2000' chair, Clasicom 'Bell' side table. Large sliding doors are by Vitrocsa with curtains by Morgan Ferry of Simple Studio. Opposite page, from top View to the Sydney CBD from the communal roof garden designed by Black Beetle. The compact entrance lobby with Anna-Wili Highfield bird sculpture.

"IT'S LIKE LIVING IN A GARDEN BUT BEING SHELTERED," SAYS ADAM, INDICATING HIS FAVOURITE SPOT, THE OUTDOOR LIVING AND DINING AREA.



In contrast, the central living, dining and kitchen area is generously sized, open and relaxed. At one end, a tall, narrow arched doorway leads to one of the guest bedrooms. The kitchen, in a striking forest green, is slotted into the south-facing corner, while a cut-out diagonally opposite brings light and garden views inside. Large Vitrocsa doors slide open completely to allow a seamless transition to the landscaped areas.

"It's like living in the garden but being sheltered," says Adam, indicating his favourite spot, the north-west outdoor living and dining area. Conceived by William Dangar, the space is fitted out with a fireplace, custom barbecue, tandoor oven and an evergreen tuckeroo tree as a focal point. "Will understands that the garden is an experience; it's a sequence of rooms. He gets that the garden is as much a part of the home as the kitchen," says Adam.

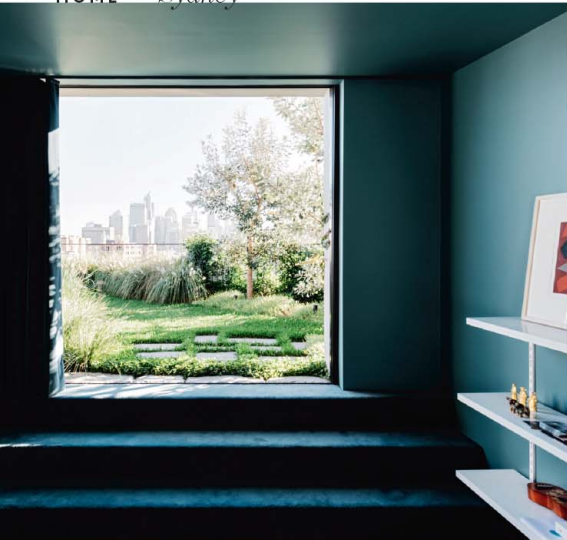
Back inside, the most unexpected surprise comes with the master bedroom, bathroom and study, all hidden away in the original goods lift and overrun. With a four-metre high ceiling the bedroom feels spacious despite its compact size. In the ensuite, a circular, blue-tiled shower is lit by a soaring circular skylight, and an outdoor bath is surrounded by local native plants. A narrow, 600mm staircase leads up to Adam's hideaway study, private upper lawn and wild native garden, also designed by William Dangar.

Where once the bulky tractors and heavy machinery that Demco manufactured sat on the roof, today it is a grassy oasis offering bird's-eye views over the changing skyline, spectacular sunsets, and a haven for birdlife. 🐦

For more go to sjb.com.au; williamdangar.com.au; blackbeetle.com.au.

This page, from top Outdoor living and dining area looking across the communal garden to the city is furnished with a pair of Gervasoni 'InOut 709' rocking chairs from Anibou. Oval custom outdoor table from Ke-Zu, with Accademia 'Vela' chairs. Stone paving from EcoOutdoor. The upper-level private lawn area is surrounded by plantings of banksia, *Leptospermum* and native grasses. Lost Tourist sculpture by Frank Van Reenen. Opposite page The guest bedroom overlooks the fish pond.





This page Evergreen tuckeroo tree provides a focal point and shade to the courtyard. Custom barbecue and Robert Plumb tandoor oven.
Opposite page, clockwise from top left View from Adam's study to the private upper lawn and garden. Kitchen is painted in a forest green to link it with the outdoors. 'Denim' tiles from Surface Gallery are laid vertically in the circular shower. Vanity is in Arabescato marble. Looking towards the master bedroom and outdoor bath. Dichondra is planted between the stone pavers.



THE MOST UNEXPECTED SURPRISE IS THE MASTER BEDROOM, BATHROOM AND STUDY, ALL HIDDEN AWAY IN THE ORIGINAL GOODS LIFT.



SPEED READ

» Architect Adam Haddow of SJB was presented with a great opportunity – to buy the rooftop space of the former Demco Machinery Company building in inner Sydney and create a penthouse and adjoining garden. » Adam's three-bedroom 150-square-metre apartment is wrapped by the garden, designed by William Dangar, and featuring expansive views across the CBD to the Blue Mountains. » The garden functions as part of the living space, rather than just a garden to look at, and it features a fireplace, custom barbecue, a tandoor oven, a fish pond and an outdoor bath tub. » Plantings are mostly natives including the focal point, a tuckeroo tree, in contrast to the adjacent communal garden space which has a more formal look.



This page: The outdoor bath is adjacent to the master bathroom. It is surrounded by mostly native plants with paper bark trees in the background. With a soil depth of 300-600mm, the plants and lawn have flourished. Opposite page: The master bedroom with blue carpet from Custom Carpets. Adam designed the bedhead that he says "hugs you". Wästberg pendant lights. Mosquito net curtain and curtains throughout were made by Simple Studio.