



WAREHOUSE WONDERS

LONG FORGOTTEN INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS GENERATE HIGHLY DESIRABLE HOMES, FINDS **CHERYL MARKOSKY**

The idea that old commercial structures can delight in a second life as groovy places to live was epitomised by Manhattan artists in New York's SoHo back in the 1960s.

Dusty, disused warehouses made way for capacious and ultra-cool studios and apartments – a trend we adopted in London when Harry Handelsman's Manhattan Loft Corporation kicked off 25 years ago.

Today, homeowners in the capital are just as wedded to the rough aesthetics of this form of historical architecture as they were back in the early Nineties, according to Bective Leslie Marsh's Matthew Marchant.

"Europeans, Americans and the British ask specifically for warehouse apartments that don't come up all that often. If an individual sees beauty in something, they're prepared to wait for it," he comments.

A typical four-bedroom house in a nearby street costs the same as a £2.35 million, three-bed apartment currently for sale in a former munitions factory in Queen's Park.

Matthew argues that there's added appeal in such an unusual space, so people are generally willing to pay more to own it.

His colleague Keith Rigby in Ladbrooke Grove is marketing a flat in a converted industrial building in Powis Mews that's held onto its old façade, but the interior's been gutted and renewed.

He suggests that this sort of hybrid contemporary-meets-rustic abode is very popular in Notting Hill. "It ties in with commercial workshops and garages in the road, which is still a working mews."

However, Rachel Bird of Foxtons Wapping believes warehouse conversions aren't just for City slickers eager to show off in a splashy place.

"They're large and lateral, but often more practical than a townhouse with lots of floors."

She sells warehouse apartments to a broad range of purchasers, including first-time buyers, those wanting a pied-à-terre, and families requiring plenty of room. Prices range from about £600,000 to north of £3 million.

Warehouse aficionados are enticed by voluminous areas, high ceilings, old beams and raw concrete pillars, according to Mitchell Murphy, Knight Frank's man in Dulwich.

A four-bedroom, £2.295 million house running over two floors of an old hosepipe factory that's on his books is likely to attract a celebrity or media-related buyer.

"It has the original vaulted timber ceiling and the master bedroom suite comes with an outdoor shower." It's these quirky touches that lift warehouse creations out of the ordinary, Mitchell suggests.

Tom Page of Fyfe McDade in Shoreditch says his patch is awash with warehouse makeovers that he describes as Aladdin's caves with many magical discoveries.

"A converted clothing factory off Brick Lane still has reel holes in the floor, while one on Nile Street contains the original flooring, steel girders and factory doors."

Tom's tip for a warehouse home is to "get advice from friends or someone in to help with the design, as it can be daunting trying to create homey spaces in very large rooms".

On the other hand, enormous lofts can result in something bold and fun, he adds. "You can be more playful in a large space. You ask things like: why didn't I have three bikes in the middle of a room before?"

The rarity factor makes warehouses extra special, explains Tim Macpherson at Carter Jonas. He's in the process of selling an



LIMEHOUSE WHARF, NARROW STREET E14

£1,400,000

Exposed brickwork and columns in a two-bed warehouse conversion that's walking distance from Canary Wharf.

www.savills.com



TELFORDS YARD, WAPPING E1

£1,750,000

Three-bed, three-bath penthouse with vaulted ceilings, two balconies and master suite with mezzanine dressing room.

www.foxtons.co.uk

industrial building on Glentham Road that's been turned into a smart, six-bedroom house.

Costing £5.5 million, it's the first property of its sort that Tim has sold in Barnes. "There are lots in Covent Garden, but not here. People love the mix of steel girders and antiques alongside modern kitchens and furniture."

Purchasers expect high-end warehouse lofts to be in top condition, like the £3.35 million Concordia Wharf apartment Alex Hensley of Chestertons Tower Bridge is selling. "It's been totally refurbished, overlooks St Saviour's Dock, and comes with two parking spaces and an on-site porter," he notes.

As not all apartments fashioned from commercial buildings are in as good a shape as this one, Alex recommends getting a survey carried out – "in case something crops up that needs a lot of attention".

And yet, these days you don't even need a warehouse to convert. Just a whiff of manufacturing heritage can be enough to keep the majority of homeowners happy.

"New homes with an industrial feel are becoming popular," claims Currell's Matt Cobb. The Fisheries in London Fields has new flats with "the look of warehouse apartments" – think brick walls and sandblasted ceilings.

He thinks that industrial-lite touches give new homes more character and distinguishes them from a rash of boring boxes that all look the same. This burst of character can also make them easier to sell.

Equally, he believes developers have a responsibility to deliver something different – "a legacy that's right and fits in with the rest of the neighbourhood".

Josh Olive of Savills Canary Wharf, who's seen his share of old and new warehouse and warehouse-style blocks, argues that a number of overseas, and some domestic, buyers really like new and shiny.

"Their expectations here are for modern, lock up-and-leave homes, with concierge services and good security. A big bonus is the security staff patrolling around Canary Wharf, offering added confidence."

Ed Robinson from Knight Frank agrees that new industrial-lite chic is the way forward. Shoreditch project Long & Waterson, incorporating 119 apartments in two old workshops and a new tower, is the mash-up of the moment.

"There are over 60 different unit types with poured concrete floors and stylish, but quite industrial, fittings," he reports.

As well as trying to stay true to original workshop structures that once accommodated furniture-makers and carpenters, new features such as double-glazed and soundproofed windows are also in evidence.

Ed sums up this innovative phase of warehouse living. "People like buying something new that has some history and personality behind it. It's all about showing sympathy to the past while going ahead into the future." 🏠



GOODLUCK HOPE, LEAMOUTH PENINSULA E14

FROM £500,000

Ballymore's mix of warehouse and tower apartments in a mash-up scheme with concierge, pool, cinema, gym and restaurant.

www.goodluckhope.com



COLMANS WHARF, CANARY WHARF E4

£525,000

You don't need to be a mustard magnate to be able to afford a two-bed flat in a Grade II-listed warehouse conversion on the Thames.

www.savills.com



CHARLOTTE ROAD, SHOREDITCH EC2

£2,695,000

Top-floor, two-bed flat with exposed beams, original brick fireplace and double-height ceilings in the heart of Shoreditch Triangle.

www.fyfemcda.de.com



LONG & WATERSON, SHOREDITCH E2

FROM £675,000

IGI's new-meets-old scheme with two workshop buildings and a new tower, topped off with an upper sundeck inspired by the New York High Line.

www.knightfrank.co.uk

THE HUDSON, SHOREDITCH EC2

FROM £895,000

From brass foundry to six new apartments peppered with heritage features, including handmade bricks, Crittall-style glass partitions and raw concrete finishes.

www.hamptons.co.uk



POWIS MEWS, NOTTING HILL W11

£1,375,000

One-bed flat with large reception space and roof terrace in a former industrial building on a pretty cobbled mews.

www.bective.co.uk

SALUSURY ROAD, QUEEN'S PARK NW6

£2,350,000

Lofty lateral space over two floors with galleried mezzanine and roof terrace in converted munitions factory.

www.bective.co.uk



KIRKWOOD ROAD, DULWICH SE15

£2,295,000

High ceilings, original vaulted timber ceiling and master suite with outdoor shower: all part of life in a four-bedroom house in a converted hosepipe factory.

www.knightfrank.co.uk