

# down to earth

The relaxed aesthetic of this minimalist-meets-maximal comfort loft apartment illustrates the beauty of a simple life

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## LIVING ROOM

Although there is an industrial edge to this space, the neutral tones of the brick, concrete and wood create a calm vibe.

Lehnstuhl **chairs**, Nigel Coates.  
**Sofas**, Trio Upholstery and Paul Hegarty Construction. **Artwork**, Jocelyn Rahm. **Coffee table**, Master Furniture Makers.  
**Cupboards**, L&Z Cabinetry



## home profile

### THE OWNER

Pam Williams, a former library director, is now retired and lives here on her own.

### THE PROPERTY

Located in the Chown Pella warehouse, which was built in 1910 in the Pearl District of Portland, Oregon, the apartment spans 100 square metres. It features an open-plan living room and kitchen, snug, bedroom and bathroom.

### KITCHEN-DINER

'Pam collects mobiles, so we found this new one for her,' says designer Mira. 'I knew it would be perfect; it moves very slowly and has a wonderful presence.' Dinner parties are held here and the mobile and bespoke cabinetry form an elegant background for entertaining.

**Mobile**, GamFratesi. **Table**, Areti. Vintage Tulip swivel **chairs**, Eero Saarinen. Bespoke **bench**, Master Furniture Makers. Bleached red oak **cabinetry**, L&Z Cabinetry

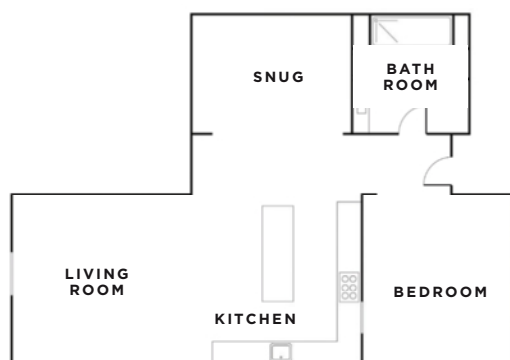








## the blueprint



At her first viewing, Pam Williams thought it might be too much of a challenge to bring this warehouse apartment in Portland, Oregon, back to its former glory, but when she discovered what the team at

Jessica Helgersen Interior Design had achieved in another unit in the same building, her hesitation completely disappeared. The designers went on to apply their unique perspective to this project, informed by ‘a respect for historical architecture coupled with an appreciation of the playfulness and brightness of modern design’.

The exposed brick, wooden beams, high ceilings, large old windows and open layout are reminiscent of the property’s past. Built in 1910, the building used to be a warehouse before being transformed into apartments. ‘Before, the walls were held down from the ceiling and a very large series of ducts was exposed above,’ says senior designer Mira Eng-Goetz. ‘Working with an HVAC mechanical engineer, we got clever about raising the walls to the ceiling and hiding the ducting.’

Once the big work was done, the remodel consisted of enhancing the character of the space while adding new features to complement it, such as the dropped ceilings and the step to the snug, which also acts as a guest room. In this

corner, Pam works and exercises via Zoom classes and, thanks to the large TV that disappears into the cabinetry when not in use, she’s set up for entertainment, too.

The soft, neutral palette is based on Benjamin Moore’s Balboa Mist, a tone that pairs perfectly with the concrete flooring, pale grey tiles, warm white oak furniture and pastel textiles. Several decorative elements are pink for a softer touch.

‘We wanted to create a home that hugs you in all the right places without feeling restrictive – a place to curl up and daydream one day and host an animated book club the next,’ says Mira. ‘To achieve this, we designed spaces that facilitate different ways of living. The rainy day nook is perfect for alone time, while the living room invites gatherings. The kitchen table is large but casual, which is great for dinner parties and for a single bowl of porridge in the morning.’

Filled with pieces that Pam loves – including the neon squiggle, which she commissioned 10 years ago and still ‘gives her joy’ – the space perfectly reflects its owner’s personality. ‘I try to engage in a

balance of old and new. I treasure the ability to change and adjust. I prefer a feeling of openness and acceptance. I look for and learn from beauty,’ she says.

The open nooks allow Pam to display objects and artwork that constantly change, while lots of hidden storage was installed in the spirit of high functionality and to reduce clutter as much as possible. Despite its relatively limited square metres, the loft gives a true feeling of spaciousness and sense of comfort reinforced through the furniture, such as the built-in sofa, for a look that is minimalist and fresh at the same time.

‘Pam is such a breath of fresh air,’ says Mira. ‘We became friends over the course of the project and I am so grateful for the connection we continue to have. She has a unique energy. I love picturing her crafting at her kitchen table below the GamFratesi mobile because, for me, that mobile is a physical manifestation of Pam – calming and playful all at once.’

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## ENTRANCE AND SNUG

The two spaces are zoned by a step, different flooring and panelling on the ceiling in the snug. The recessed desk was designed for Pam's card-making and letter-writing.

Pink table lamp, Entler.  
Cabinet, Hedge House





## BEDROOM

'We took special care to expose the concrete walls where possible to acknowledge the building's history as an industrial structure,' says Mira. A nook (right) was left in the bank of storage for a make-up and dressing space.

Rug, Aelfie. Bespoke make-up table and mirror, Master Furniture Makers. Stool, Carlyle Collective





## home truths

### GO-TO DESIGN BRAND?

Pam: Kinnasand for rugs.

### INTERIOR MUST-HAVE?

A NatureCast concrete sink in the bathroom and kitchen because of its beauty and because it's easy to keep it clean.

### FAVOURITE WALL COLOUR?

Neutrals. Monochrome paint tones can be easily enhanced with additional small touches of colour in artwork, cushions, collages and collectibles.

### TOP PIECE OF FURNITURE?

The extra-large dining table that can accommodate many guests.

### IF YOU HAD TO PICK YOUR FAVOURITE FEATURE ...

A mirrored wall added to the snug increased the spacious feel of this small and intimate area.





## BATHROOM

'The kitty door was Pam's idea and speaks of her playful nature,' says Mira. The shower was designed to feel private 'like a sheltered cove', while the unlacquered brass fixtures add patina and visual warmth.

Japanese **tiles**, Umi. For similar **brass hardware**, try Corston Architectural Detail





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