



AT HOME AT WORK

In the first of a new series on the spaces in which people create, we talk to Tane Cox of Hamilton's Red Architecture about the place he feels most at home: work *Words Gena Tuffery Photography Larnie Nicolson*



WINNING DESIGN Red Architecture was the regional winner in two categories in this year's Architectural Designers New Zealand Awards: for Commercial Interior Architectural Design and the Resene Colour In Design Award. "This is exactly the kind of intervention which should be done in tens of thousands of buildings around New Zealand," judges said.



Why is this a good space to create in? It feels quite relaxed and carefree in here. You don't feel limited or like you need to conform to anything - in trend or thinking. It's filled with our own personal stuff, and it's very changeable. If we think something's cool in any field it ends up in here. The art is constantly changing, and we're adding to it all the time... it's about creating a space with no limits.

As an architecture firm, why did you decide to work with an existing building rather than build your own? We wanted to be right in the centre of the city. We looked at a lot of buildings in the area, but the character of this one stood out. It's a heritage building from the late 1800s, so it's pretty special.

Did the fact it's a heritage building affect what you could do? Externally it's heavily protected - structurally and aesthetically. But internally we could do what we wanted as long as we left the windows alone. And why wouldn't you leave those windows alone?

How did you decide what to keep and what to change? It was an early 90s fit-out - all carpet and brown walls. So we stripped it back to its bare form, then let the space reveal itself. We built it up from there. Once we uncovered the concrete floor, we decided to keep it straight away - it's kinda like a big piece of art.

Was creating the best creative work areas a main focus? We were driven by having a space that inspires creative thought, yes. Once we'd stripped everything back we were left with four 'pockets' to work with, so we started by looking at those areas and seeing what would work best. That's why we have our meeting table on wheels so we can follow the sun around. We can almost turn the entire room into the meeting room, or we can have a meeting against the wall, depending on what works or just how we feel that day.

Do you have any tips on how to approach transforming an old space such as your office? Start with the bare bones of the building and assess what's best from there. Don't be in a rush to overdesign it.

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