

Ways of Seeing

Ways of Seeing is about perspective. It's about reflecting on the various ways in which the immaterial (ideas, emotions, impulses) can influence the tangible (places, spaces, objects). And, ultimately, it's about considering architecture and design from all angles in order to effect better outcomes. Within these pages, Bedford By Milieu collaborators DKO Architecture and DesignOffice ruminate on the inspirations and approaches that inform the materiality of their spaces, and couple Dean and Sam talk about their experience living at Peel By Milieu.

DKO Architecture

Design Director Jesse Linardi is the principle architect of Bedford By Milieu. Jesse has more than 20 years' experience delivering exemplary and intelligent designs. When conceiving Bedford Street, he considered the local context, drawing inspiration from nearby buildings and materials, and from the histories that shaped them.





“Despite being known for its industrial heritage, it’s common in Collingwood to stumble across old façades that have been overrun by greenery. In most instances it’s a welcome trespass on the bricks and mortar.”



“Small communities have big impacts on the neighbourhoods in which they operate, and they depend in part on the spaces they occupy. The exchange of ideas relies not only on people but on the spaces that facilitate conversation and collaboration.”



“Reimagined inside to suit the trappings of modern life, many buildings in Collingwood retain their original facades and preserve the long-standing visual language that has come to shape the neighbourhood.”



“A place with distinct character, diverse culture and eclectic offerings, Collingwood is an ever-evolving landscape. It’s always experimenting, always changing, always improving.”



“The interplay of light, air flow, even walkability: these elements have profound effects on one’s experience of home. Thinking about internal and external spaces as connected rooms, rather than disparate areas, allows for integrated designs.”



“The process of designing Peel By Milieu led us to new ways of thinking about liveability, which we have translated into the design language of Bedford By Milieu. Boldness, honesty and contextual relevance underpinned each design choice, with emphasis placed on the ways in which the spaces can influence and improve upon the lived experience.”

DesignOffice

Led by Mark Simpson and Damien Mulvihill, this award-winning practice responds to each project with empathy and careful consideration. Their studio is underpinned by a holistic approach to design, anchored by core principles of visual clarity and simplicity. From conception, Mark and Damien's work on Bedford By Milieu has been an ongoing process of exploration and refinement. They have kindly shared some thoughts on creating these spaces and on their approach to interior design.



The crux of good interior design is in the bones of a space. It depends on spatial planning and volumetric configuration, on lighting, both natural and artificial, and on the nuanced visual cues that connect adjacent areas. Fundamentally, our process is guided by deep consideration for how people will actually use a space, with emphasis on how it makes them feel – day to day. We are all individuals, so invariably our goal is to effect intelligent designs that facilitate a level of personal preference, to allow people to cultivate their space to complement their way of life. This hinges on a ‘less is better’ approach.

For us, the pleasure of it lies in the pursuit of balance and architectural purity. We start with an assessment and analysis of the site, and a dialogue unfolds. What is the context of this site? What opportunities does it offer? What challenges does it present? We also think deeply about how sites can interact with their surroundings. Where will the natural light come from?¹ Where will the shadows fall?² What kind of lighting will best support the activities of the occupant? The answers come to us through a process of negotiation with the site and by way of experimentation; modelling and sketching, testing and refining, this is how we come to recognise a site’s true potential.

When designing the interiors of Bedford By Milieu we conceived them as a series of layers, from the empty canvases of the apartment shells through to the occupants’ more personal touches: furniture and objects, bedding and clothing, food and drink, art and books, necessities and luxuries. We considered what people might surround themselves with, because ultimately these details amount to more than the sum of their parts. Indeed, they come to shape one’s experience of home.

Simple and effortless, the base palette combines white walls and concrete ceilings with oak flooring and neutral woollen carpeting. Building on this foundation is a layer of surface linings and joinery: ceramic tiles, stainless steel, timber veneer and focused elements of saturated hues. Contemporary classics have been chosen for key features and fittings, utilising well-designed staples that we believe in and live with in our own homes.

Extending from the balcony through to the living area, a neutral full-length tiled wall³ adds scale and anchors the space with a textured backdrop, which connects the interior with the exterior. In complement, a window seat⁴ next to an operable window further blurs the boundaries of inner and outer, allowing occupants to enjoy the exterior from the bedroom. The seat works as a quiet nook or as part of a dining setting. It also functions as an external storage cupboard that conceals downpipes and other services.

Thinking of the interior and the adjacent outside area as tethered enhances the comfort and feel, and effects a sense of openness. This impression is underscored by generous floor-to-ceiling heights, dual aspect natural light and well proportioned floor plates. We consider a visual and physical connection between the interior and exterior to be a critical element of Australian apartment design.

For us, design is a process of editing. Once we have created an interior we step back to view the space as a whole, the ultimate goal being to refine everything to serve the interior and benefit the eventual occupant. With this in mind, the Bedford By Milieu interiors have been rigorously refined so that occupants can feel truly at home, now and into the future.

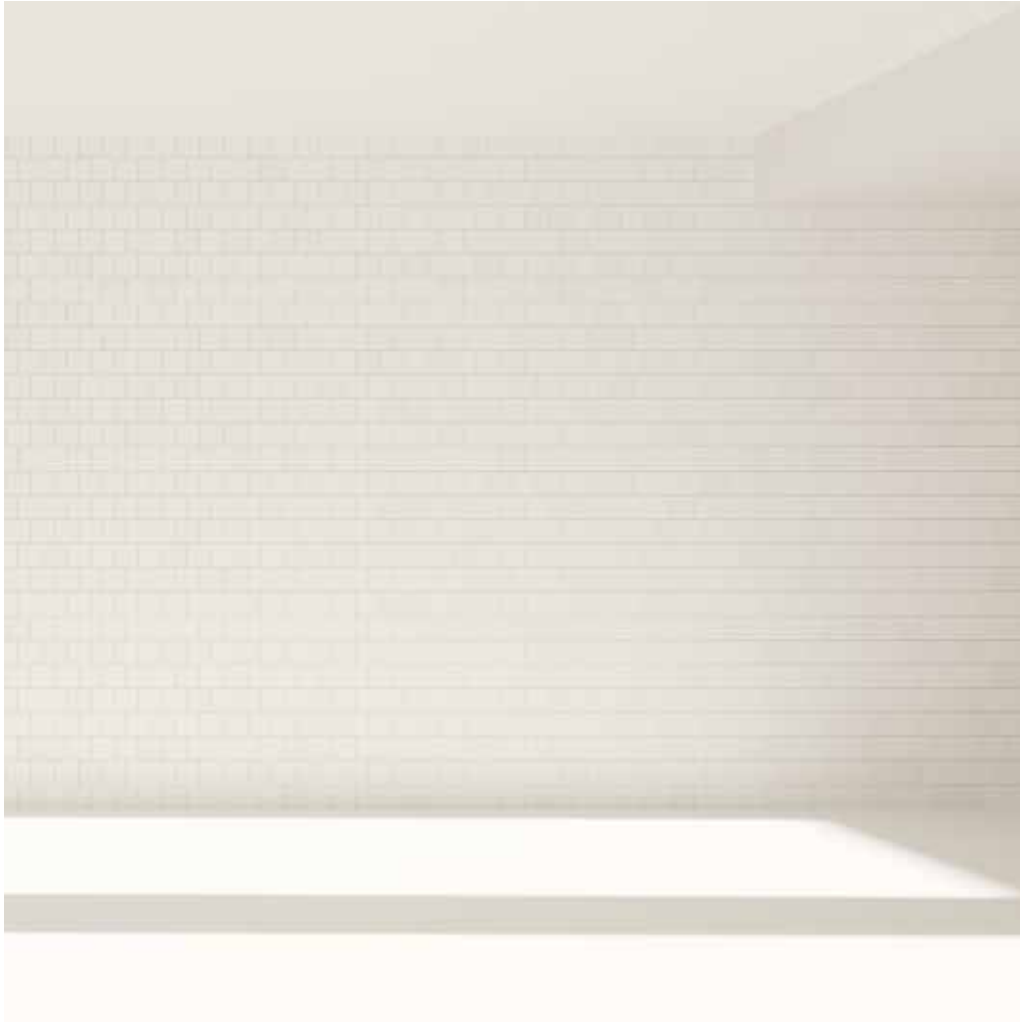
Text by Mark Simpson and Damien Mulvihill



1 Natural light



2 Shadows falling



3 Full-length tiled wall



4 Window seat

Dean and Sam

In December last year, couple Dean Ung and Sam Page moved into an apartment in Peel By Milieu. More recently, Nick Smith of *Drop Magazine* met with them to talk about their experiences living in a Milieu home. Over dinner, Dean and Sam spoke with Nick about the advantages of buying off the plan, and the pleasure and comfort that the well-crafted space provides.



[Dean is cooking dinner]

DEAN It's really nice cooking in this kitchen. We were so detached in our last place. We'd have friends over and when we cooked they'd be in a separate room and one of us would be cooking on our own. So now we always cook and sit at the bench here. It's nice.

NICK It's so great when you have a place where the kitchen is close to the living area. It's probably one of the reasons I enjoy cooking so much. Because I can do it and still be part of a conversation.

DEAN Yeah me too.

NICK Nice. So you guys bought off the plan right? Was that something you ever imagined you'd do?

DEAN Well we could've bought an established apartment but it would have to be art deco or something where the space and proportions were right. Like I said, the floor plan is so important to me.

SAM For me, the obvious thing was the stamp duty savings.

DEAN See, I don't think about that.

[Laughs]

SAM Yeah, but that was definitely one of the benefits. I was also really excited that we were moving into a place that no one had ever lived in before. This is our space. We're going to bring our energy into this space.

NICK Does that create a strong sense of ownership?

SAM Yeah, definitely. It's nice to live in a house that has history but with this place we're creating the history. And I hope that we live here for a long time. I really love this place.

DEAN We could definitely follow our parents advice and 'buy an investment property first'. But at the end of the day I don't want to spend another seven, eight, nine, ten years working equity off my investment property to finally buy a house that I can enjoy living in.

Even if it's a small place, at the end of the day I'm living in a place that I really love coming home to. Sam and I are proud of our place.

NICK Did you guys know much about DKO or the DesignOffice before you bought the place?

DEAN I'd done a lot of research on that sort of stuff. DesignOffice designed Mud Fitzroy's interior.

NICK It's such a beautiful interior. I'm a sucker for Vitsoe shelves.

DEAN One of our friends is part-owner of Kettle Black, so I knew they'd designed Higher Ground, and I also knew through friends what projects they'd done before. I didn't know about Milieu before we came across the project though. It wasn't until we put the word out to our architect and designer friends and asked if they had heard of Milieu, which they all had. If you have friends who are in the industry who respect them, it automatically adds a layer of trust. My father was very much of the opinion that if you're going to buy an apartment off the plan, from a developer, make sure you do all your research. Check what other properties they have done. Whether they have had any issues. Go and see the properties in person. See how it's made.

SAM It stressed us out a little but it was coming from a good place.

NICK I imagine a lot of parents would do the same.

SAM They just wanted to make sure we had done our research and were completely informed.

DEAN It was good though, because Dad did ask really important questions but it eventually got to a point where I said, 'Dad...you need to stop being like that, because you're actually taking all the fun out of it.'

NICK You can tell from Milieu's previous projects there's a certain level of quality, though.

DEAN Correct. Sam is very adamant about retaining the feel of old

Melbourne too, so we made sure that we were in a place that fit into the environment well.

SAM I just like that this place is not pretending to be old Collingwood. It's a new building and still stands out in its own right but compliments what previously existed here. I love the angles on this building too. You look at it from different vantage points and it becomes a completely different building. It's really clever.

NICK Today was the first time I've seen it since it was completed. Coming up Wellington Street you really notice what a beautiful building it is.

SAM Did you notice the clock downstairs outside Congress? It's got a little red and green light on it. Similar to when Parliament is sitting, they've got a green light to say that the venue is open and a red light to say they're closed.

DEAN It's that attention to detail that we love. The Congress guys are such cool people too. You should definitely go there. The service is amazing.

NICK I'm going to take my fiancée.

DEAN She'll love it.

SAM The Milieu guys have done an amazing job. And even post-sale and having already moved in, they still treat you with that amazing level of service, which we experienced with Charlie. That's something I know you probably wouldn't get with big developers.

DEAN Definitely. I spoke to one of my girlfriends who has bought investment properties and we were both having handovers at the same time. I was telling her about what Charlie had done and how she'd been communicating with us. I said, 'Oh yeah, it's fine, they're organising this for us. And all the defects have been fixed.' She was like, 'Oh my God, that's amazing. They're moving us in and half the foyer still has exposed beams.' They just didn't care. Not one bit.

NICK Even some of the smaller developers who do townhouses and apartments don't give that level of service.

DEAN And that's the thing. When you look at Milieu's website and their collateral, they put faces to the names. They're putting their personal reputations on the line. They're not just saying, 'Oh hey! We are a company and we do this and we'll provide you with this.' They're saying, these are our people, these are their backgrounds, these are their personalities.

NICK It seems they've got this really tight-knit community they collaborate with frequently too. They're focused on building more than just an apartment for someone to live in. They want to provide an experience.

SAM Our assumption before we bought was that Peel Street was going to be their flagship and a benchmark. So we put a lot of faith in that they'd put a lot of effort into this project. Even when they had the open days before we moved in, there were a couple of apartments that were completely furnished just so that people could come and see what their work was like. There were so many people just having a look and asking, 'Is this for sale? How can I buy one?' In my mind I was thinking, 'Oh thank God we bought one!'

[Laughs]

This transcript is an edited excerpt from a much longer conversation. Please visit milieuproperty.com.au/melbourne-milieu/dean-and-sam to read the full version.

Interview by Nick Smith
Photography by Morgan Hickinbotham



A living space is made from living.



A seasonal arrangement adorns the living room table.



Stainless steel is a key material in the Peel By Milieu kitchens.



To Dean, the kitchen design was one of the apartments' most attractive features.



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Spaces of Influence®

The Congress clock, proudly hanging below Peel By Milieu.

Developed in partnership with



Design by Studio Hi Ho

Milieu

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