



# Light and easy does it for loft conversion

**T**he Factory in Kerrison Road, Norwich, adds another piece to the jigsaw that represents developer Alex Shaw's career.

In various guises, Alex has been unassumingly restoring and converting redundant industrial and institutional buildings since 1990, keen to bring hip New York-style loft living to new locations.

Through his developments, Alex has been on a mission to revolutionise British perceptions of good working and living space. His outlook is Modernist, believing in value and clean, simple, functional design, emphasising light and space.

Alex started by renovating a small 1500sq ft workshop into two modern apartments in south London, spotting early a rundown area that had promise.

The pattern of spotting places and buildings just before they become fashionable is a skill that Alex has tried to replicate ever since.

Now, along with partner Tim Buxton and their company Spaceworks, he's bringing the concept to Norwich.

The pair are nearing the complete regeneration of The Factory – a redundant 50,000sq ft factory – into 24 state-of-the-art loft apartments and penthouses close to the city's riverside area.

Alex Shaw said: "We fell in love with the building as soon as we saw it. Its rare barrel-vaulted wavy roof is just spectacular."

"We were also very excited by the



**LIGHT FANTASTIC:** Tim Buxton (left) enthuses about loft space in The Factory (above).

whole regeneration planned for the riverside area.

"The Factory was extremely well built to a cutting edge Modernist design in 1953 for Laurence, Scott & Electromotors as a statement of its engineering innovation. Much of The Factory was the site of LSE's technical drawing section, designed with the maximum number of windows and long skylights – originally built to give designers and workers as much natural light as possible. It's the light that now fills our new apartments and penthouses."

Alex's partner Tim Buxton feels that Norwich has much to offer. He said: "The riverside regeneration offers so many possibilities in one of the only industrial corners of Norwich."

But he adds a note of caution to people in search of loft-style living: "Developers seem to keep falling into the trap of squeezing as many small flats into warehouse buildings as possible, thinking that because they're in a warehouse, that makes them lofts. We don't believe it does. We think you need great space and light, which many of these so-called lofts fail to provide."

And so for Spaceworks the battle continues to place good modern design in the centre of people's lives. Alex added: "We're a niche regenerator, but that doesn't stop us having big ideas and sticking to them. We believe the secret is to give people great space and to keep the dreams affordable. We believe The Factory proves that."



● Apartments in The Factory start at £185,000 for one bed, rising to £340,000 for a 1880ft<sup>2</sup> (175m<sup>2</sup>) penthouse. Half the properties have been sold off-plan. Savills and Gilson Bailey are handling sales.

**AFFORDABLE DREAMS:** Alex Shaw in The Factory (inset), which offers a light and airy atmosphere, having been originally designed to house Norwich engineering company Laurence, Scott & Electromotors' designers.