

NEW

Paramount by The Office Space

Sydney's art deco Paramount Pictures building has been recast as a Mad Men-style workspace for wealthy hot deskers

WORDS:

Marissa Shirbin

Paramount by The Office Space is a shared workplace in Sydney consisting of 22 individual suites. It will cost a decent amount of money to put this address on your email signature. Precisely how much depends on your selection from a menu of services that's as flexible and diverse as modern work-life itself. Do you need an office here for a day or a month to help work through a difficult project? Would you like phone calls answered or errands run? Do you simply need a meeting room for an hour in an effort to walk the talk with a new client?

Modern work, with its freelancers, networkers, start-ups, successes and stresses, has brought with it a new breed of office spaces across the world. Paramount, created by Sydney-based office makers The Office Space, is the latest variant – a less “tech” version of New York's General Assembly; a less “party” version of the world's Ace Hotels; a less “celebrity” version of London's Soho House. Sure, it has its communal spaces, networking events and MacBook clientele. But it also has privacy, a receptionist, and peace and quiet: old-fashioned things that most modern shared offices scrimp on, or simply can't provide.

Paramount is an L-shaped space located on the upper ground floor of a functionalist building in Surry Hills, a neighbourhood of terrace houses, exposed-brick cafes and good-looking creative industry workers. The building shot up in the 1940s as the headquarters for Paramount Pictures. Domenic Alvaro, principal of project architect Woods Bagot, used its elegant shape to create the individual workrooms. “The building's signature form is echoed in the softly curved handmade timber office suites that wrap around the contour of the floor plate. These rhythmically appear throughout the space,” he says.

Walking through Paramount is like walking through Don Draper's office in Mad Men season one and two, before the firm is bought out >>





and forced to downgrade. The furniture here is heavy, the walls between individual suites look solid, and everything glows. Woods Bagot might not be impressed with the pop-culture reference, but the fact that they've put a whisky repository and a cigar humidor in Paramount's boardroom does make you think of that mythical time when work was done with so much focus and style.

At the elbow of Paramount is the office's communal kitchen and bar, the focal point of which is a brass island bench by sculptor Morgan Shimeld. "Morgan was asked to honour the curves of the building. We couldn't be more thrilled with the result. It glistens on the stone floor, bathed in natural light from bay windows beside it," says Naomi Tosic, business manager of The Office Space.

Workrooms, meeting rooms and hallways are decked out with Eames Time-Life chairs, Molteni & C's Gio Ponti armchairs, Marc Newson by Noritake glassware, and Australian and international artworks by talents including Archibald Prize winner Ben Quilty and US pop artist Corita Kent. Details and finishes are faultless. Custom solutions include indirect up-lighting to avoid shadowing when working into the evening. The fittings, designed by lighting specialist Light Practice with Woods Bagot, are made from solid brass sheeting bent into shape, with solid cherrywood end caps, suspended on brass rods. ▷



Above Gio Ponti armchairs by Molteni & C

Below The boardroom is decked out with Eames Time-Life chairs

