

A disused soap factory in the centre of Port Melbourne has been transformed into the stylish new headquarters for cycling apparel brand MAAP. Clare Cousins Architects has reimagined the typical workplace through a pared-back design, letting the innovative functionality of the space do the talking.

MAAP HQ by Clare Cousins Architects

Port Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

Words by Aaron Grinter • Photography by Tess Kelly



The breezy, light-filled design cultivates a relaxed yet professional atmosphere. White tones and natural materials are punctuated by occasional colour, injecting life and vibrancy into the space. The design is minimal but deliberately practical, like a serious cyclist, unencumbered by unnecessary ornament. While the overall structure follows sharp angles and long straight lines, there is a repeating motif of circles expressed in various forms such as rugs and furniture, perhaps subtly referencing the frame and wheels of a bike.

The layout is split across multiple levels; the main level houses workstations and offices, as well as a series of flexible gathering spaces, a place to greet a client or for those quick moments of collaboration over coffee where your colleague has the exact solution to your problem. The soft furnishings are low-backed and reclining, setting the casual mood of the office. The buffed stainless steel kitchenette is well appointed, including a professional coffee machine and a continuous supply of local beans. Upstairs, the mezzanine level houses a set of state-of-the-art smart bikes, ideal for testing the latest MAAP product – or for

raising your heart rate after lunch, with showers and laundry facilities available for afterwards.

The 5.5-metre-high ceilings and services are put on show, painted a clean white to illuminate the space and take advantage of the natural light streaming through the high clerestory windows. Privacy and seclusion are also sometimes necessary parts of the workday, so soft-curtained booths are offered, as are contained office cubes, well-appointed in ergonomic tech yet pared back and clad in raw OSB plywood for a natural atmosphere. Larger meeting rooms nestle beneath the mezzanine, each one in an impressively monochromatic pastel, as though to eliminate any interference with the creative process, allowing staff to focus on collaboration and innovation.

Recognising that the community of the workplace was one of the casualties of the pandemic, MAAP and Clare Cousins Architects have created a beautiful office setting that is flexible, considered and full of ways to connect – providing staff with all the ingredients for inspired creativity to thrive.

