

# Domain APARTMENTS KATHERINE TOWNSEND

## REVIEW

### Key tips for first-timers

The Great Australian Dream: A Guide to Buying Your First Home  
Peter Boehm  
Slattery Media Group  
\$25



**BETWEEN price rises, interest rate hikes and competition, first home buyers have got it pretty tough right now. That means information and preparation are more important than ever. Peter Boehm's *The Great Australian Dream* caters to a long-neglected need for impartial, factual advice.**

Unlike so many property books out there, this is no spruik but a how-to manual for getting into the market for those with no experience.

Boehm, who has spent more than 30 years in the banking, finance and property sectors, offers step-by-step advice on working out your spending capacity, getting the right kind of loan, searching for property, negotiating, buying at auction and more. Each phase of the process is skillfully dissected, laying out the pros and cons.

There are also tips on managing your home loan and contending with lenders if you run into trouble.

CHRIS VEDELAGO

## A LESSON IN CONVERSIONS



### Old building tops the class

This former inner-city school gets an A-plus for innovation.

**\$970,000 plus**  
SOUTH MELBOURNE  
**16/284 Dorcas Street**  
Auction 11.30am, May 28  
Agent R T Edgar 9699 7222  
Melway 57 F2

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THE closure of inner-city schools in the early 1990s — when falling enrolment numbers looked as if families didn't want to live in the inner city and newer would again — led to an apartment-building boom, with some clever reworking of century-old buildings.

Schools' elegant exteriors and large-roomed interiors gave a good canvas for residential conversion and the apartments within the former South Melbourne Primary School in Dorcas Street show how well it can be done.

The 1880 neo-Gothic building has a classic and ornate exterior, with two levels either side of a central and lowered entrance. The apartment for sale is on the top level (stair-only access) and manages to fit three bedrooms — with three bedrooms and two living areas — into what was once just one large schoolroom. The lower level opens into an entry hall that has a powder room to the left and then a galley kitchen, fitted with the timber and black popular a decade ago.

The rest of the room is a living and dining area with stairs set over on one wall. Timber floors and metal-and-wire-contained stairs keep the decor simple.

Two tall original windows light this room and they also provide light to a second living area and the adjoining main bedroom, with an suite and built-in wardrobes, on the middle level.



This cosy living area receives light from over the void and the bedroom via a wall of white louvers.

The top floor is up with the pigeons, with the stairs arming onto a walkway that has a void one side — with some of the school's original timber trusses on view — and two windows fitted into the slate roof to allow light in and hot air to escape. This level has two bedrooms, at right angles to each other, with a good-sized laundry and a family bathroom tucked in the corner.

Both bedrooms are a good size and the larger of the two has a cute bonus of a window looking into the school's former tower. Outside, it's all ornate stonework and pigeons cooing.

Amazing to see at the open for inspection I attended were families plenty looking at the school anew, drawn by its proximity to things such as South Melbourne Market and Albert Park.

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