The system determining x_1 and x_2 can be written:

$$\begin{bmatrix} | & | \\ a_1 & a_2 \\ | & | \end{bmatrix}^T \begin{bmatrix} | & | \\ a_1 & a_2 \\ | & | \end{bmatrix} x = \begin{bmatrix} | & | \\ a_1 & a_2 \\ | & | \end{bmatrix}^T b$$

That is

$$A^{T}Ax = A^{T}b$$
 (i.e just multiply $Ax = b$ by A^{T})

We will see in the next part of these notes that the same linear system arises in general.