



DOT'S *house*

ARCHITECT ATLAS ARCHITECTS / STYLING DEVINA NATASHA LOEKITO
WORDS BETH GRESHWALK / PHOTOGRAPHY TESS KELLY

Melbourne-based Jenny Vizard shares how function, flair and heritage flavour converted her rental cottage into the *purrfect* abode for her and her beloved cat Dot.



OLD-MEETS-NEW FAÇADES

Behind the heritage front façade lies the newly renovated addition. "The circular window awning at the back adds an irregularity to the contemporary interpretation of the heritage place, creating a point of interest, but most importantly providing a porthole out to the world for the 'Queen of the Castle': the cat, Dot," says architect Ton.



Jenny Vizard bought a single-storey Victorian heritage terrace home in North Fitzroy in the late 1980s to be used as a rental property. The two-bedroom, one-bathroom cottage provided years of fond memories for the librarian, who'd painted, gardened and maintained it with her family over a 30-year span.

So when Jenny's own home sold in 2017, the stars had long been aligned to transform her beloved investment into the *purrrfect* abode for herself and her cherished cat Dot.

"I wanted a home that was understated, welcoming and functional," Jenny recalls. "The cottage could be adapted to provide me with what I needed—a bedroom, bathroom, kitchen, living room, and spare room for guests ... and of course, room for Dot."

Indeed, her cat's happiness was paramount when Jenny decided to renovate. After all, Dot spent the most time at home, an environment where Jenny felt she should feel secure and happy. This would include distinct areas for eating, toileting, play and relaxation.

Beyond these ambitions, Jenny desired plentiful

storage for her treasured books and other items, along with soft, filtered light and optimal task lighting in the kitchen. She adds, "I didn't want a bath tub or spa; just a lovely walk-in shower. Nor did I want a kitchen bench with stools—having no desire to eat whilst perched on a stool—rather, a space for a dining room table and chairs."

Jenny enlisted the help of Melbourne-based Atlas Architects, who would team with local Resicon Master Builders to revamp her cottage in two years.

First, they would contend with the home's structural challenges: extensive wall cracking, internally and externally, laundry facilities in an outdoor shed, and the home's long, narrow site with party walls on both sides, inhibiting natural light from coming in. Because of these issues, most of the house beyond the heritage-protected façade required demolition and rebuilding.

"Atlas felt it was important to create a harmonious dialogue between the new build and existing fabrics," Jenny explains. "They achieved the concept of 'the frame'—using the new to frame the old, and the old to inform the new."



< "The existing roof line informed the rear façade, the ceiling line, and the north awning. The window shapes would act as the different perspectives framing the outside context. The existing brickwork and hard plaster texture of the original cottage were exposed along the hallway. The new joinery, wall niches and light fittings over the kitchen bench provide a more literal interpretation of this concept, as they 'frame' my history—highlighting my ornaments and books."

Complemented by a subtle colour palette of light timber, white walls and clean black lines, the open shelving underscores Jenny's story while doubling as a storage solution with the concealed cabinetry throughout.

"Shelves, with appropriate reinforcement, were also fixed to the north wall of the house, acting as a ladder for Dot to access the round window—her porthole to the outside world," adds Jenny.

Also integrating the outdoors was the addition of skylights and large bi-fold doors, providing the quality lighting Jenny yearned for.

Meanwhile, the unified laundry is kitty-centric, offering a separate sink for Dot's dishes plus private eating and toileting spaces—cleverly accessible via cat flaps under Jenny's desk. Flaps were also installed in the master bedroom and at the back of the house, allowing Dot entry into the two small yards.

And with the stylish kitchen, dining area and walk-in shower worth showing off, Jenny is beside herself with love for her new home.

"I pinch myself every day. Dot enjoys it too ... she is happy, healthy and relaxed. A princess in her own domain."

atlasarchitects.com.au [@atlas_architects](https://www.instagram.com/atlas_architects)





THE
nitty gritty

SIZE: 2 bedroom, 1 bathroom
SQUARE METREAGE: 97m²
ARCHITECT: Atlas Architects
BUILDER: Resicon

FLOOR PLAN

- 1 GUEST BEDROOM
- 2 BATHROOM
- 3 MAIN BEDROOM
- 4 KITCHEN
- 5 LAUNDRY
- 6 DINING
- 7 LIVING
- 8 COURTYARD

A floor plan diagram of the house. It shows a layout with eight numbered areas: 1 (Guest Bedroom), 2 (Bathroom), 3 (Main Bedroom), 4 (Kitchen), 5 (Laundry), 6 (Dining), 7 (Living), and 8 (Courtyard). The diagram includes walls, doors, and basic furniture placement.



★
"I wanted a home that was understated, welcoming and functional," says Jenny.

Style TO STEAL

Get this purrfect abode's understated style with these products.

HOME TOUR



COLOUR PALETTE



ART PRINT Rebecca Judd Loves x Adairs 'Marble Arch Nude' wall art \$99.99 adairs.com.au / **PENDANT LIGHT** Beacon Lighting 'Marcel' 250mm pendant in smoke/black \$189 beaconlighting.com.au / **CHAIR** 'Ark' natural dining chair \$199 lounge-lovers.com.au / **THROW** 'Newport' grey marle chunky knit throw \$199.99 adairs.com.au / **POT** 'Slim Pickins' pot in white (small) \$50 thebalconygarden.com.au / **VASE** Marmoset Found 'Balloon' vase blue (small) \$69 marmosetfound.com.au / **SOFA** 'Draper' velvet 3-seat sofa \$1,899 lounge-lovers.com.au / **PILLOWCASE** I & M Home 'Mondo' 100% French linen pillowcases (pair) in white \$92 imhome.com.au / **CUSHION** Amigos De Hoy 'Pages' square leather cushion in tan \$157.95 zanu.com.au / **PLATES** Denby Studio 'Blue Coupe' dinner plates 26cm (set of 4) \$159.95 kitchenwarehouse.com.au / **RUG** IKEA 'Hellested' rug flatwoven (133 x 195 cm) \$99 ikea.com.au / **BEDSIDE TABLE** Life Interiors 'Norah' bedside table in oak \$399 lifeinteriors.com.au



WORK *from home*

For many, working from home is new territory. We've sought out words of wisdom from those who've been doing it for years.



CREATE A DEDICATED WORK ZONE

"Have a dedicated workspace away from distractions and include little moments that fill you up," says interior designer and stylist Kate Moss. "Personal treasures, a burning candle and fresh flowers bring me joy, but make sure it doesn't get too cluttered. A clear desk equals a clear mind."

Product developer Catherine Slatter agrees. "Put a plant or fresh cuttings or flowers on your desk—it makes you want to be there and enjoy the space and it keeps the area feeling fresh," says Catherine, whose home office is pictured opposite.

Architect Kitty Lee works from her spare bedroom. "This is where I have my desk and a very comfy chair set up next to the balcony, so there is plenty of fresh air and natural light," says Kitty. "Everything I need to keep me focused on work is organised in this room to ensure I'm not spending time distracted in other rooms throughout the day."



"Choose a spot with loads of natural light and if possible separate from your main living areas so you can separate work from home."

— CATHERINE SLATTER, PRODUCT DEVELOPER



'Puzzle' desk priced from \$279 norsu.com.au

AVOID DISTRACTIONS

Start by eliminating the obvious distractions like TV and social media. Turn the telly off, and hide the phone away. "I find that if my phone is on my desk during working hours, I tend to hop on Instagram to trawl for inspiration, only to go down a rabbit hole and an hour later realise I completely wasted my time," says editor of *Adore Home* Loni Parker. "I find keeping the phone in another room stops me from procrastinating."

For owner of Interiors Addict Jen Bishop, it's all about efficiency. "Because I'm currently juggling working from home with two small kids I find that efficiency is everything, whether that's getting up a bit earlier for an hour of power before they wake, or banning checking emails and other notifications until the task in hand is complete," says Jen. "I also like to give myself little incentives to get things finished, like the next coffee!"

Having a regular work routine can also help keep productivity up. "Start work at set times and stop for lunch," says product developer Catherine Slatter. "I prepare it the night before to save wasting time in the kitchen."



Pottery Barn 'Nash' leather swivel desk chair \$1,499 potterybarn.com.au



BROSA 'Gabe' office chair \$349 brosa.com.au

OFFICE CHAIRS >



Milan Direct 'Gatsby' velvet office chair \$299 templeandwebster.com.au

IMAGE OPPOSITE PAGE ARCHITECTURE ATLAS ARCHITECTS / PHOTOGRAPHY TESS KELLY
IMAGE TOP OF THIS PAGE INTERIOR DESIGN CATHERINE SLATTER / PHOTOGRAPHY MORGAN KELLY