



# SUPERSIZE ME

SOMETIMES, YOU'VE JUST GOT TO MAKE THE MOST OF WHAT YOU'VE GOT — AND THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENED FOR A SMALL HOME THAT'S BIG IN HEART





**DETAILS**  
**HOUSE** BIG LITTLE HOUSE  
**LOCATION** FITZROY NORTH, VICTORIA  
**DATE COMMENCED** JULY 2012  
**DATE COMPLETED** NOVEMBER 2013

**WE LOVE FLOOR-TO-CEILING  
 TIMBER CABINERY — A CLEVER  
 DESIGN FEATURE THAT'S IDEAL  
 FOR STORAGE AND EASY ON  
 THE EYE**

**ABOVE** Integrating storage into  
 a staircase is a great way to keep  
 the home neat and tidy  
**BELOW** A traditional terrace hides  
 its modern interior all too well

**WORDS** // ANNABELLE CLOROS  
**PHOTOGRAPHY** // CHRISTINE FRANCIS

**W**hen you're dealing with a terrace, the words "historic", "classic" and "small" are often some of the first to spring to mind. These Victorian- and Edwardian-era properties are no doubt beautiful, unrivalled pieces of architecture. But size is something they're simply lacking, with a measly 5m x 26m your average size.

For a family of four, a two-bedroom North Fitzroy home can fuel a never-ending game of hide-and-seek, where a moment of quiet contemplation just doesn't exist. Enter Nic Owen Architects, the firm tasked with boosting this two-bedroom un-renovated gem into a functioning family home that preserves its roots. "The client was after more space,



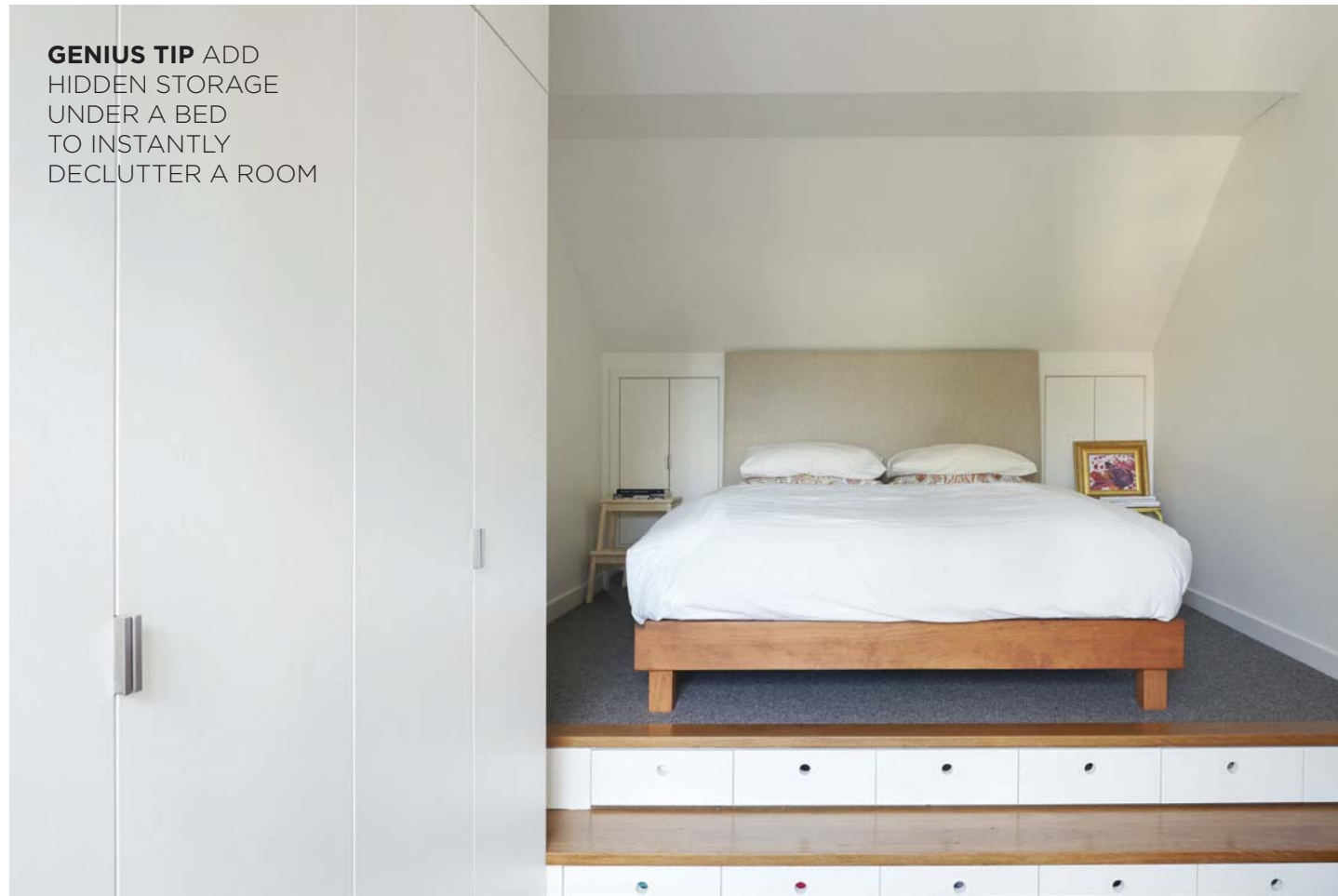


TO MAKE A SMALL HOME  
FEEL AS BIG AS POSSIBLE,  
UTILISING NATURAL LIGHT  
AND A NEUTRAL COLOUR  
PALETTE IS PARAMOUNT





**GENIUS TIP** ADD HIDDEN STORAGE UNDER A BED TO INSTANTLY DECLUTTER A ROOM



TO CONQUER THE SPACE ISSUE AND INCREASE LIGHT, VAULTED CEILINGS ON THE GROUND AND FIRST FLOORS WERE USED — A CLEVER WAY TO STRETCH THE AREA WITHOUT IMPACTING ON THE OTHER BUILDINGS IN THE STREET

a larger living area, updated facilities and a better connection to their backyard,” says architect, Nic Owen. “They have two young children and were outgrowing their current dwelling.”

With an extension on the cards, the renovation had to be clearly and cleverly thought out to ensure the build didn’t jeopardise the neighbours’ amenities and access to sunlight. The project also had to “address the historic fabric of the existing built forms including the rear laneway”, says Nic.

Doubling in space but not size, the project encompassed adding two extra bedrooms, a bathroom, study and improved access to sunlight and storage. With limited space to work with, the only option was to extend the ground and first floors, which is not as easy as it sounds. “It was problematic

as any new works cast shadows over the south neighbours’ north-facing living room windows,” says Nic. “Careful sunlight and shadow studies were undertaken to define the acceptable external envelope of the new works. The ground-floor southern wall was pitched at a low height and the first floor was set back from the south boundary and kept central along the length of the property.”

To conquer the space issue and increase light, vaulted ceilings on the ground and first floors were used — a clever way to stretch the area without impacting on the other buildings in the street. “This increased vertical height gave the opportunity of high windows to capture extended views of neighbouring trees,” says Nic. “In line with strict heritage guidelines, all new works are concealed from the street front and hidden behind the existing roof.”



**BELOW** Opting for a neutral white palette makes the bathroom appear larger







A David Trubridge pendant brings an organic element to the room



**ABOVE** A statement timber staircase injects warmth into the home

#### PROJECT TEAM

**Architect** Nic Owen Architects  
([nicowenarchitects.com.au](http://nicowenarchitects.com.au))  
**Builder** Whale Builders  
([whalebuilders.com.au](http://whalebuilders.com.au))  
**Structural engineer**  
John Horan & Associates  
(03 9836 1717)  
**Building surveyor** Reddo  
([reddo.com.au](http://reddo.com.au))

#### MATERIALS

**Walls, cladding and roofing**  
Colorbond sheet metal  
([colorbond.com](http://colorbond.com))  
**Glazing and doors** Double-glazed  
Capral aluminium ([capral.com.au](http://capral.com.au))  
**Flooring, stairs and deck**  
Blackbutt timber  
**Plywood joinery** Hoop pine  
**Tiles** Porcelain  
**Appliances** Neff ([neff.com.au](http://neff.com.au))  
**Integrated refrigerator** Fisher & Paykel ([fisherpaykel.com.au](http://fisherpaykel.com.au))  
**Sink** Abey ([abey.com.au](http://abey.com.au))  
**Taps** Scala ([reece.com.au](http://reece.com.au))  
**Basins** Caroma Liano  
([caroma.com.au](http://caroma.com.au))  
**Toilets** Porcher ([reece.com.au](http://reece.com.au))  
**Heated towel rails** Hydrotherm  
([hydrotherm.com.au](http://hydrotherm.com.au))

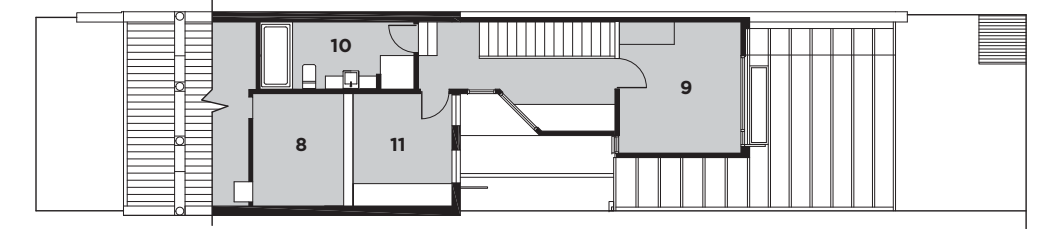
“WE MANAGED TO USE A SINGLE PANEL OF GLASS, WHICH REALLY BRIGHTENS THE SPACE AND PROVIDES GREAT VIEWS” — NIC OWEN

To make a small home feel as big as possible, utilising natural light and a neutral colour palette is paramount. Juxtaposing against the dark exterior of the home, the interior is a different story, filled with timber cabinetry and flooring and encased by white walls. The skylight that runs from the study area above the stairwell plays the starring role in ensuring the home is filled with rays throughout the day. “We managed to use

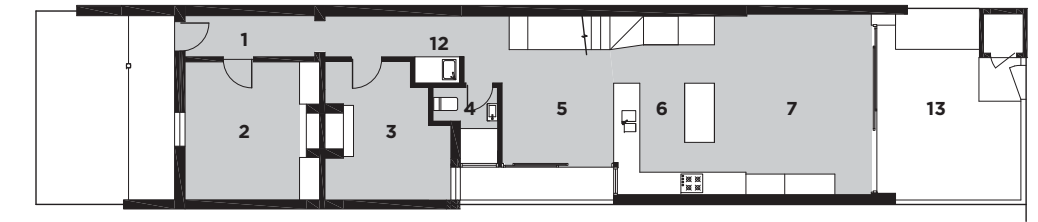
a single panel of glass, which really brightens the space and provides great views,” says Nic. From the back of the property, a fence conceals most of the home, with just a peak of the roof visible from the street. Giving this tiny space a boost wasn’t straightforward, but despite its pitfalls, the property is a great example of clever design and thinking outside the square to preserve a historic home with a healthy dose of modernism. 🏡

#### LEGEND

- 1 ENTRY
- 2 STUDY
- 3 LOUNGE ROOM
- 4 BATHROOM
- 5 DINING ROOM
- 6 KITCHEN
- 7 LIVING ROOM
- 8 BEDROOM
- 9 BEDROOM
- 10 BATHROOM
- 11 SITTING ROOM
- 12 LAUNDRY
- 13 COURTYARD



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



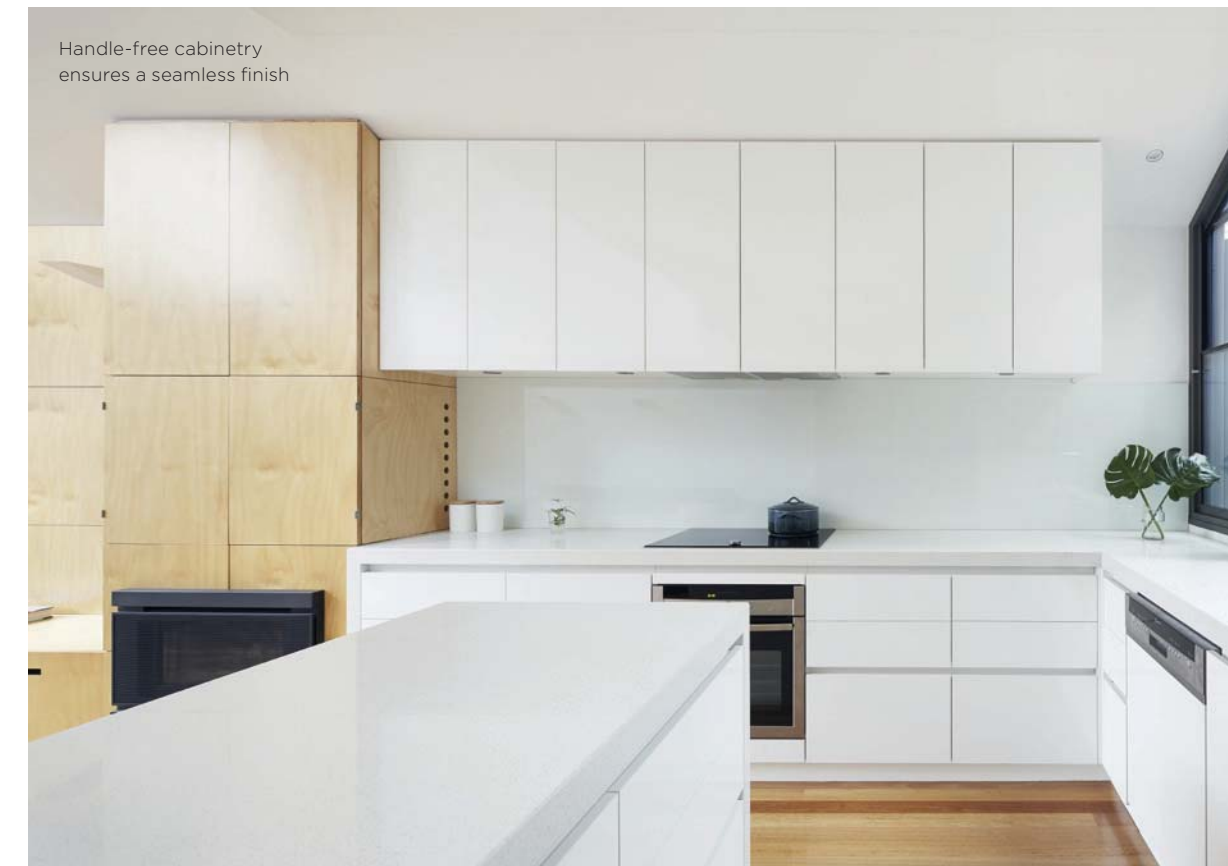
GROUND FLOOR PLAN



#### Colour Palette

Blonde timber, white walls and the slight green of the glass provide the base colour. Highlights of plum, red and green are seen in the furnishings, but colour is used sparingly. The dark grey of the steel anchors the design

Handle-free cabinetry ensures a seamless finish





01



02



03



04



# Get the Look

SIMPLE IS BEST IN THIS MELBURNIAN HOME

- 01: David Trubridge pendant from [davidtrubridge.com](http://davidtrubridge.com)
- 02: Damascus diamond hand-tufted wool rug from [zanui.com.au](http://zanui.com.au)
- 03: Design By Life sideboard from [zanui.com.au](http://zanui.com.au)
- 04: Liberta lounge from [beyondfurniture.com.au](http://beyondfurniture.com.au)
- 05: Timber Malmo bedside table from [downthatlittellane.com.au](http://downthatlittellane.com.au)
- 06: Star Anise cushion from [kushliving.com.au](http://kushliving.com.au)
- 07: Paper Series vase from [haydenyoulley.com](http://haydenyoulley.com)
- 08: Isamu Noguchi coffee table from [spacefurniture.com.au](http://spacefurniture.com.au)
- 09: Marble candle holders from [thedesignhunter.com.au](http://thedesignhunter.com.au)
- 10: Carly design chair in Floyd Platinum fabric from [ozdesignfurniture.com.au](http://ozdesignfurniture.com.au)

05



06



07



09



08



10

