



This article in our iPad edition has extra images and video. Search for Vet Practice Magazine on the App store

Tonal contrast

When a suburban vet knew he needed to expand his practice, an ideal property was just a stone's throw away. By **Kerryn Ramsey**

SOMETIMES WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING FOR is right under your nose—as Dr Simon Wake of Wellpets Kallangur found out last year. The vet had been running a small-animal practice in Brisbane's northern suburb of Kallangur since 2008 but was ready to take it up a notch. His lease was about to expire and, due to the success of the practice, he was keen to purchase the property outright.

The thought of updating and renovating the surgery, however, was rather daunting, so Wake turned to Elite, the construction and fit-out specialists, for advice. And this is where it starts to get interesting... Rather than renovating the compact building, Elite's managing director Rod Phillips came up with a more spectacular solution.

Just down the road was a 1980s-built red double-brick two-storey edifice that once operated as a National Australia

bank. It had been vacant for the past 12 months. Although Wake's original practice was just 900 metres away, he'd never contemplated buying and converting the old bank into a fully equipped vet practice.

"To be honest, it was never on my radar," he says. "But the more I looked at it, the more appealing it became."

For this veterinarian, the decider was the chance to design his ultimate high-tech practice. "Now I have 1200 square metres of land, with 250 square metres of floor space, in the centre of Kallangur so there's plenty of space. Overall, we want to show our clients we're moving in the right direction and giving them a nice professional place to bring their pets. It's also been a massive motivator for the staff," he says.

Once Wake bought the property, he listed all the requirements to create an efficient, modern practice. After working

with Rod Phillips and Elite's design team, the layout included three consult rooms, a dedicated surgery, separate cat and dog wards, an isolation area, a reception counter, separate manager's office, kitchen facilities, bathrooms and a storage area.

"Since there's so much space, we made sure Simon could expand down the track, adding extra consult and surgery rooms in the future," says Phillips.

Elite managed the whole project, which included planning and full design, as well as construction. From the get-go, Phillips guaranteed that the demolition and fit-out would take a mere six weeks. "All we kept was the ceiling-mounted air-conditioning casing," says Phillips. "If you look up, this ducting is the only reminder of when the building was a bank. We also kept the original painted bricks. A simple paint job gave these elements a contemporary edge."

Photography: Simon Taylor (www.thephotoshop.com.au)

