



Timeless character melds with state-of-the-art

The venerable Queenslander style of housing punctuates the landscape of Townsville in the far north of the state. While practical and full of character, converting any residential building to a state-of-the-art dental surgery always poses challenges.

For father and son team, Bernie and Craig Courtney, both long standing dental practitioners in Townsville, renovating a 100-year-old Queenslander they owned adjacent to their existing practice seemed an ideal solution to their lack of space.

"I graduated in 1989 from the University of Queensland and commenced work in the private sector with Dr Geoff Kelly in Hermit Park, Townsville," Dr Craig Courtney said. "I purchased the practice in April 1992 and several years later was joined by my father, Bernie Courtney, when dental prosthetists were legislated in Queensland.

"The practice served us well for many years but with the introduction of assistant dentists, David Young and Sam Patel, it became increasingly obvious that extra space was desperately required.

"The old practice was situated in a 75 square metre transportable where we had three surgeries and some 10 staff crammed in. Needless to say, we were going hell for leather to keep up in extremely difficult conditions."

The surgery had been untouched in design for 50 years from when Dr Kelly had built it on the front of the block adjacent to his residence on Charters Towers Road, one of the main roads in Townsville. When Dr Kelly passed away, the opportunity arose for Dr Courtney to purchase the surgery, land and adjoining house with the intention of expanding the forever-increasing workload into a larger practice.

"At around that time, I met Daryn Bungey from Henry Schein Halas and during a trip to Adelaide, Daryn made himself available to show me some projects which they had supplied equipment for," Dr Courtney said. "And this is where Sam Koranis, the Managing Director of Medifit, came into the picture. I saw quite a few projects that Medifit had undertaken and found that their design and high levels of fitout and construction was exactly what I was looking for.

"I was particularly impressed with a large ground-up project that Medifit had completed in Clare, South Australia. Dr Martin Pynor spoke highly of Medifit and it was at this stage that I decided to appoint Medifit for our project. He also went through the whole process from the design to the construction phase. I am most grateful to Daryn as he gave me his own time in showing me a number of

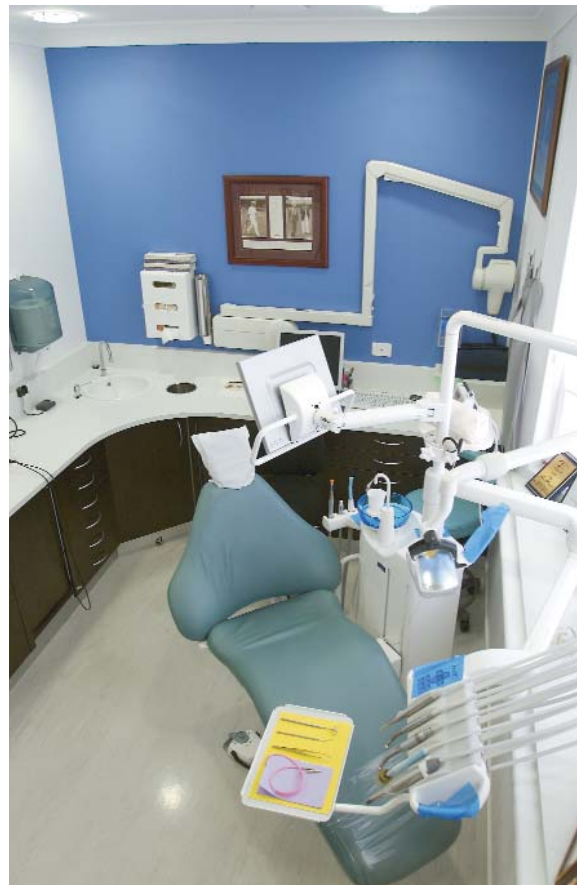
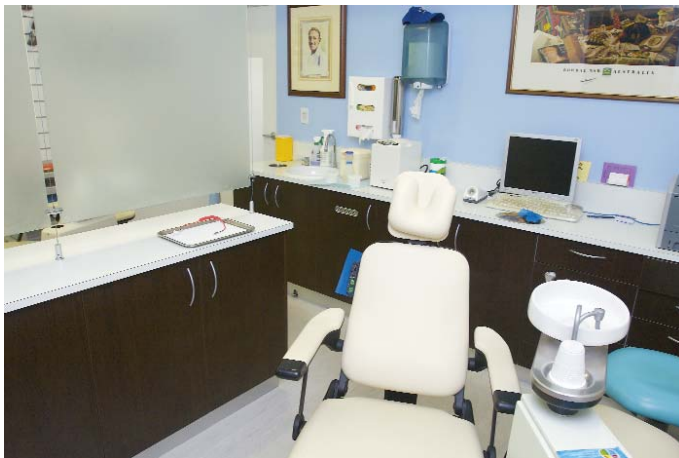


projects and for sharing with me his wealth of knowledge of the dental industry and recommendations made on which equipment would best suit my practice.

“On my return to Townsville, I called Sam and he was most accommodating. He flew to Brisbane to specifically meet with me and my father to discuss the project. I explained to Sam that if possible, we would like to retain the existing Queenslander on the block and renovate this into a practice. Sam was extremely happy with this suggestion and agreed that the house had far too much character to be demolished. Both Sam and I agreed that a fully renovated character house would have much more street presence in a street that is predominantly a developed commercial concrete jungle.”

Medifit took up the challenge and due to Council regulations relating to parking, the internal space could not be any more than 172 square metres. An essential requirement of the renovation was also to ensure that the building was compliant with the current access and mobility





standards for disabled people. This involved the inclusion of a disabled parking bay, the construction of a 17m long ramp along the side of the building with a landing at the top, new larger entry door, and large public toilet for disabled access.

On Dr Courtney's wish list was four surgeries, as well as all the regular items including steri, staff room, staff toilet, reception and admin area, and storeroom. Added to this brief was the requirement for a prosthetic/denture surgery with two chairs for his father and a closely located lab for the creation of moulds, dentures etc.

A new plant room with finishes complimentary to the existing exterior timber boards was built on the south side of the building. This plant room houses the suction motor and the compressor.

The reception desk is long enough to accommodate three staff members and with the admin area in close proximity, printers and faxes, etc



can be located on the specific printer bench in the admin area, freeing up valuable space on the reception desk. The admin area houses three computer positions as well as multiple mobile pedestals and the computer server. Overhead cupboards enable complete organization of paperwork.

The existing laundry of the house was converted into a small office niche for Dr Courtney and the second dentist. This incorporates space for two computers, a mobile pedestal and overhead cupboards.

The staff room can accommodate up to seven staff members at any one time and is fully equipped with a fridge, sink, microwave storage and overhead cupboards. This is an ideal space to have team meetings or share lunch breaks.

The design philosophy behind the new Courtney Dental was to create a distinct difference between the old house and the new surgery. It was important to retain the existing framework at the

point of entry and as patients travel further into the space, they become aware of the modern inclusions and technology. Existing timber floorboards were retained and restored, as was the traditional timber panelling and textured glass windows and timber frames.

The waiting area can accommodate around 12 to 14 people and fully upholstered arm chairs have been selected and supplied by Medifit. Provision has been made to allow for two televisions to be installed onto the bulkhead for patient entertainment.

The original timber batten raked ceiling was retained in the waiting area and creates a lofty, veranda feel. The modern aspects of the new clinic start with the simple, minimal white reception counter. The designer wanted the reception counter and walls behind to feel like a separate pod inserted into the old Queenslander house. The reception counter sits underneath a new bulkhead ceiling with modern simplistic pendant lights to create drama.



Summary

The Practice

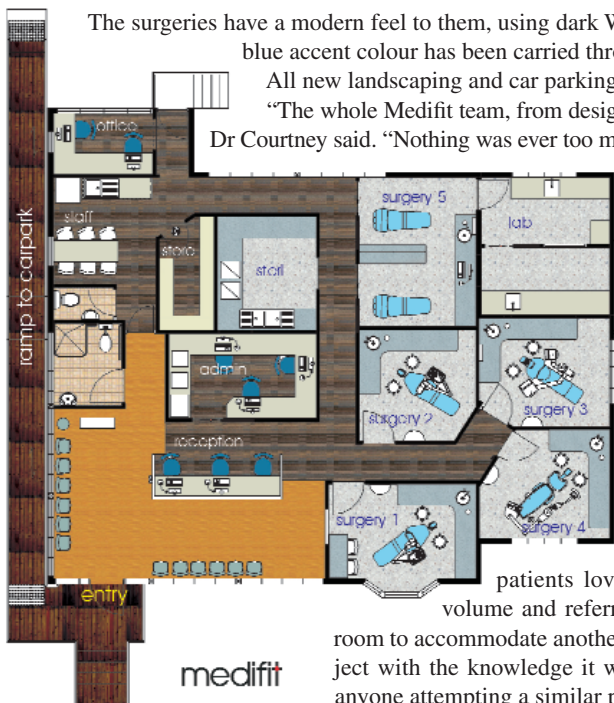
Principal	Dr Craig Courtney
Type of Practice	General
Location	Townsville, Queensland
Size	172 square metres
No of chairs	4 clinical + 2 prosthetics

The Team

Design	Medifit
Senior Designer	Geoffrey Raphael
Construction & Joinery	Medifit
Project Managers	Medifit - Mark Evangelisti and Claus Hein

Equipment

Dental Units	Planmeca Compact i and Sirona C8
X-Ray	Planmeca Intra
Autoclaves	Statim and Tuttnauer
Compressor	Dürr
Suction	Dürr VS900



The surgeries have a modern feel to them, using dark Wenge laminate on the cupboard doors with a soft white benchtop. The blue accent colour has been carried through into each surgery.

All new landscaping and car parking was built to enhance the new dental clinic.

“The whole Medifit team, from design to construction, were extremely professional and helpful at all times,” Dr Courtney said. “Nothing was ever too much trouble for them and the solutions based approach was exemplary.

“As in all large and complicated projects, there are always hurdles to overcome and in particular, Council By Laws. Medifit always managed to work through these with positive outcomes eventuating. Also, in an overheated construction industry in far North Queensland, Medifit proved that they could source trades from as far south as Brisbane to ensure the project was completed to their high standards.

“For this I wish to thank Sam Koranis, as at times, I thought the promises made were unachievable but each time he met his obligations and was always at hand with a solution to each problem. Unbelievably, this all happened from a company with a Perth head office.

“I am extremely happy with the project and wish to thank all the Medifit team for making my dreams a reality. All my staff and patients love the new practice and the business has dramatically increased in volume and referrals to the extent that I am getting Medifit to redesign the prosthesis room to accommodate another hygiene room. Obviously, Medifit will be undertaking the whole project with the knowledge it will be completed to my satisfaction. I highly recommend Medifit to anyone attempting a similar project.”