



## State of the art dentistry on Chapel Street

**F**inding the time to renovate busy practices is always a challenge. When the location is already perfect and demand for services high, it can be easy to overlook the shortcomings of the environment in favour of status quo.

Melbourne's Dr Jonathan Hartley found himself in this exact quandary for several years before finally the moons aligned and a window of opportunity to refit came up for his South Yarra domain.

After graduating dentistry in 1969 and working in a Clifton Hill practice, Dr Hartley had decided to open what began as a branch practice in 1972 in the more central location of South Yarra. The corner of Commercial Road and Chapel Street was always a thriving retail mecca but in the past 25 years, it has become a tourist destination recognized for its high fashion and fine dining.

Even though his surgery was very outdated and renovations long overdue, the prospect of trying to incorporate his two passions - dentistry and art - into a profes-

sional environment had become a complicated issue over the years and had been left on the back burner for another day. When Medifit were finally approached to lend a hand, they used all their talents to combine a functioning dental surgery with an art gallery that would not only comply with current dental practice standards, but showcase Australian artists personally collected by Dr Hartley.

"I first met Medifit's managing director Sam Koranis two years ago in May 2004 when I finally decided that a refurbishment was required to the 34-year-old practice," Dr Hartley said. "Due to limitations placed by the landlord, we unfortunately took 14 months after that to finally commence the project. During this period, Sam was extremely patient and was always there to assist and offer suggestions when required. These efforts were offered gratuitously and were greatly appreciated by myself.

"When the decision was made to go ahead, Medifit were only given 11 weeks

to design, gain Council approvals, price the project, demolish the existing and rebuild the new surgery. This timeline was based around the practice being closed for a 6-week period whilst I went on holidays to Europe. Design commenced on 18 July 2005 and practical completion for operation was to be on 3 October 2005."

"The project was quite difficult due to the time restraints placed upon us by Dr Hartley and the nature of the location," Mr Koranis said. "The site is situated on the first floor with no lifts. It was difficult to park with the trams running 24/7 at the busy intersection and the nearest legal parking is approximately 150 metres from the front door up a narrow set of steep stairs. The challenge, however, was set and we went forth in earnest."

Medifit's interior designer, Leanne McNulty, began by contacting Dr Hartley and all of his team members to establish their new requirements to tailor the suite to their every need. The main design phi-



Above: A 3D rendering of the proposed reception area design.  
Below: Reception area prior to work commencing.





losophy and brief was to retain the general overall layout and work flow of the current practice while cosmetically enhancing the fixtures and furnishings and rejuvenating the ambience to a crisp and modern environment.

The original panelling in the reception area and surgeries were relined to create a new flush modern look and the removal of air-conditioning systems placed into the external windows were replaced with a ducted system, restoring the beauty of the original arched windows.

Dr Hartley utilized two surgery's and one of his requirements was to refurbish these existing rooms and to fit-out a third. He also wanted to re-design the sterilisation room, staff area, laboratory, reception and administration area and waiting room plus introduce a consultation room and refresh area, along with additional storage.

The existing 126m<sup>2</sup> had every nook and cranny jam-packed. The challenge was to retain the existing layout and design cabinetry with better storage that is both highly functional and aesthetically pleasing.

Dr Hartley's artworks were used as the basis for the general design philosophy and the colour scheme used throughout. The walls were painted in understated white to be the blank canvas enabling the artwork to stand out.

The overall colour scheme is light and neutral, using a timber vinyl flooring throughout the corridor to create an element of warmth and to compliment the strong earthy toned carpet layed within the waiting and administration area.

The reception area is open plan with clean and simple linear lines. An element of interest is the cantilevered front reception capping which acts as a surface for clients to complete forms and add privacy for the practice administrator. Additional overhead





## Summary

### The Practice

Principal	Dr Jonathan Hartley
Type of Practice	General
Location	South Yarra, Victoria
Size	126 square metres
No of chairs	3

### The Team

Design	Medifit
Senior Designer	Medifit, Leanne McNulty
Construction and Joinery	Medifit
Project Manager	Medifit, Michael Bleechmore

### Equipment

Units	Sirona C4+, C2 and M1 Treatment Centres with Sivision Patient Communication
X-Ray	Sirona Orthophos 3DS Digital OPG Sirona Sidexis Digital Intra Oral X-Ray

storage and a custom built patient card file system was designed to house all hard copy stationery.

A new refresh station for clients is divided with a frosted glass partition, creating privacy yet still keeping the open nature of the practice. Upon Jonathan's request, the entry to each surgery do not have doors to allow the continuity of a relaxed and friendly environment.

In the existing two surgeries the original Sirona chairs and equipment were retained, new cabinetwork, floor coverings, benchtops and workstations were designed to brighten up the area and create additional storage for a neater working environment. The third surgery was fitted out with a new Sirona chair, equipment and cabinetwork.

The lab area was totally defitted and re-designed to suit Paul's (the technician) specific brief. Additional overhead storage and delineated work areas were emphasized to ensure a productive and safe workflow. The lab joinery is designed to compartmentalize the existing equipment.

The final outcome of the refurbishment retained the original layout of an open and friendly dental practice and simplified the introduction of "The Dentist" into a modern and user friendly environment for both staff and clientele.

Because of the gallery style layout, patron, artist, and visitor

can fully appreciate the ambience that has been created. Patients who now attend the practice admire differing genres of contemporary Australian art throughout the practice, commencing at the surgery entrance, reception areas, patient refresh and finally through to each of the surgeries.

"On my return from Europe, I was pleasantly surprised to find the project was not only completed but the quality of the work was of the highest calibre," Dr Hartley said. "I was glad that I had entrusted Medifit to undertake these works in my absence. Their knowledge of dentistry also meant that I didn't need to spend many hours on the design allowing me to concentrate on my dentistry (and vacation!)."

"I wish to thank all the Medifit team for their efforts during the entire project. Since the fit out has been completed, I find that my staff are far happier in their new environment and our patients cannot believe the transformation. Our referrals have also increased considerably since completing the works. I couldn't be happier."

