



## Art deco splendor built for a lifetime

**A** gracious building exemplifying the Art Deco era has been given a spectacular new lease on life as Lifetime Dental Care in the South Perth suburb of Como.

The successful transformation of the building for Perth dentist, Dr Geoff McLaughlin, was the result of years of planning and a sympathetic design, which respects the architectural beauty of the building and its grounds.

An element of luck was also involved as Dr McLaughlin was in the market for a new location close to his existing practice, knowing he would not be renewing the 10-year lease on those premises.

“I had a 10-year lease on the premises I was practicing from but with a few years to go, I made the decision to look for a new location rather than renew,” Dr

McLaughlin said. “So I started looking around the area as I didn’t want to move too far away to retain the goodwill I’d already established.

“After several months, I got lucky and found a perfect 2-storey, pre-war art deco house on a 1600 square metre block. It was on a corner of busy Canning Highway and only 500 metres from the practice so it was perfect! After some negotiating, we were able to purchase it right before the property boom in Perth.”

Dr McLaughlin had designed his existing surgery but the new premises were larger and he could see that it would benefit from specialist knowhow. It was also in very “original” condition.

“The new house had a lot of character and I wanted someone to do a really good job of renovating it,” he said. “I could see

that we would have had difficulty getting the workflow right and configuring the surgeries to fully optimise the space so I went in search of specialist advice. You pay for mistakes in the design phase every day of your working life, so getting help made a lot of sense.

“I’d seen Anne Levitch’s designs in Australasian Dental Practice for years and her style really appealed to me. My wife Samantha and I met up with Anne in Perth and we visited the house and she also met with my local builder, Bella Casa, as well as Bill Elsegood from DentPro who I was using for the joinery.

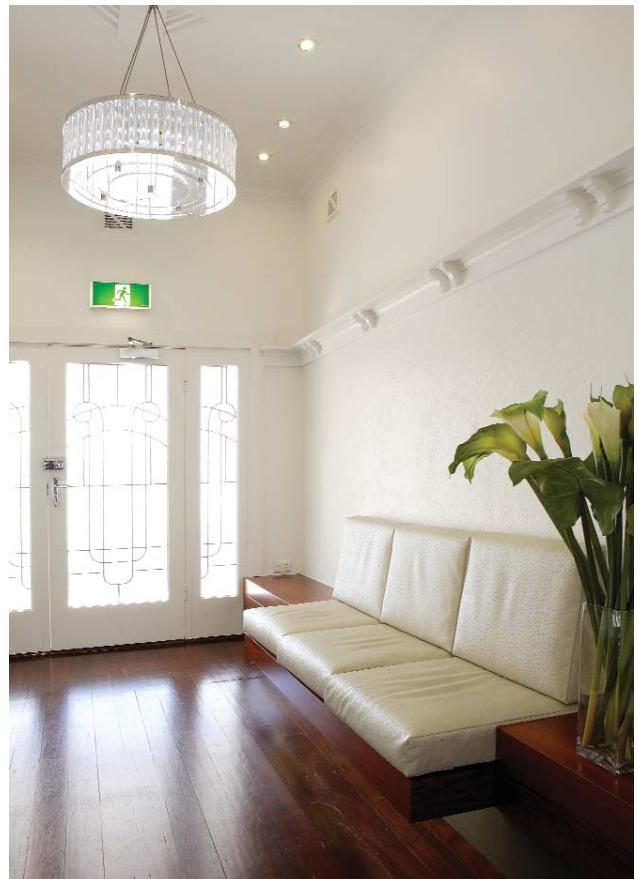
“Anne was very open to discussing our own ideas about what we wanted to do with the property as well as offering her own invaluable knowledge and experience. We loved the deco style of the



building which we wanted to retain while also modernising it. We wanted more treatment rooms than the old practice and we wanted it all to flow properly. Anne took all of that on board.”

Levitch Design Associates were commissioned for site plan, building alterations, statutory approvals, interior planning, detailing + finishes, and signage design. Countless hours were spent discussing and planning the layout and structural changes required to transform the old house into a contemporary art deco surgery with adequate lighting and an ergonomic workflow and Dr McLaughlin said his wife’s eye for detail proved invaluable throughout the process.

LDA provided the layout for the building with the surgeries being set-up similar to the treatment rooms in the old practice so as some cabinetry could be reused. Bill Elsegood had built those for the last practice and would also complete all the new joinery.





A key feature of the surgery design is ‘wrap-around’ cabinetry and wall-mounted dental units, which keep instruments and consumables close at hand when required, but leaves the dental chair completely uncluttered and free.

The streamlined look of the main surgeries is enhanced by the latest A-dec 500 chairs, ceiling-mounted lighting and LCD flat panel monitors as a patient distraction.

Another feature of the building design is that the dentist’s and

hygienist’s surgeries are located side-by-side, with a pair of surgeries at each end of the building. This fits the typical workflow of professional diagnosis and follow-up treatment by each hygienist and allows the hygienists to easily consult with the dentist.

The selection of wall mounted instruments for the dentists’ chairs also works well, enabling everything from the initial consultation to involved procedures to be undertaken in the chair without intimidating the patient.



“Having the delivery arm tucked away under the bench makes the chair very open, whereas other chairs may make the patients feel claustrophobic with tubing and instruments pointing at them,” Dr McLaughlin said.

“Another benefit of the A-dec chair is that the suction is at the rear, away from the patient, but very convenient for the assistant. It also has adjustable, hinged arms with a lot of flexibility for various chair positions.”

The new practice also has a large galley-style sterilization room, which required new openings to be cut in the walls and structural changes within the building. The steri room is open at both ends, providing lots of room for staff entering from both pairs of surgeries.

Opposite is a fully equipped laboratory and adjoining laundry for in-house laundering of uniforms, towels and clinical gowns.

The front room has also been opened up to accommodate a reception desk and waiting room, but retains the grand entrance hall and original interior fittings such as nickel plated door hardware, decorative ceilings, original picture rails and magnificent art deco fireplace and mantle. Polished floorboards and large leather ‘club’ lounges complete the picture.

Much has been made of the natural ambience, including the original leadlight windows, while the addition of safety glass across the front verandah screens out road noise whilst retaining the view of the large lawn, landscaped garden and new art deco style wrought iron fence.

Not only are the patients treated to a touch of luxury, but also the staff, thanks to a spectacular attic conversion including modern kitchen and ‘bar-like’ staff amenities area.

Fittings and finishes include low voltage down-lighting, fully-equipped kitchen with Corian bench-tops, oven, microwave, dishwasher, kitchen bar stools, a built-in lounge and glass topped tables and chairs.

The private staff amenities area is safely hidden away upstairs and adjoins the dentist’s own private office. Each have views over the surrounding suburb and Swan River via attic windows set into the vaulted ceiling.

Dr McLaughlin said there are many benefits from the move such as greater visibility to passing traffic on busy Canning Highway.

LDA developed striking exterior signage for the facade, which was designed for maximum exposure. The format and materials



## Summary

### The Practice

Practice	Lifetime Dental Care
Principal	Dr Geoff McLaughlin
Type of Practice	General
Location	Como, Perth, Western Australia
Size	275 square metres
No of chairs	4

### The Team

Design	Levitch Design Associates
Senior Designers	Anne Levitch and Jeremy Edghill
Construction	Bella Casa Developments
Project Managers	Alan Pilatti & Ben Roberts (Bella Casa) and Bill Elsegood (Dentpro)
Fitout	Dentpro
Installer	West Coast Dental Depot

### Equipment

Dental Units	2 x A-dec 542 wall mount 2 x A-dec 500 chairs 2 x A-dec Cascade Radius (relocated)
Sterilisation	2 x Lisa 500 Class B
X-Ray	Planmeca Dimaxis with Scan X Duo
Compressor	Jun Air QF1202
Suction	2x Cattani Turbo Smart A in tandem
Software	Dental 4 Windows



used reference both the character of the building and the practice brand.

“We’d been in the old location 10 years and people still didn’t know we were there,” he said. “The new practice is on the first bend of the Highway out of the city towards Fremantle. It’s a big white house on a corner so you can’t miss it. New patients are doubling each month and the locals appreciate that we renovated an old house as so much is being knocked down in this area. It’s effectively become a landmark.

“Also, by expanding to four treatment rooms, I’ve been able to take on another dentist and expand the patient base. A nice benefit of this is that I’ve been able to spend more time with my young family on school holidays this year and the practice has kept going while I’ve been away. It’s a much better balance.

“I can’t thank everyone involved enough as the project has been so rewarding in so many ways. From the inspiring layout carefully crafted by Levitch Design Associates, to the detailed cabinetry and building works and the state-of-the-art equipment provided by West Coast Dental Depot, it is truly a practice that will last me a lifetime.

“Having a work space that is exciting to be in is also great for morale and motivation. It’s like a Vogue magazine layout and I want to come to work every day. The staff love it too and our patients are nothing short of blown away. I couldn’t have asked for more.”