



## Grand design sets new standard

By Joseph Allbeury

**D**ental practices have found homes in everything from office blocks to quaint heritage houses over the years, but in Melbourne, Dr Devika Iyer may have managed a first. After years of looking around for a place to call her own, she finally set-up shop in the grandstand of what was once a premier playing ground of the Victorian Football League.

Plagued with traffic problems and an oversupply of playing fields once the Australian Football League was formed, Waverley Park has now become home to the Hawthorn Football Club and serves as their official training ground. The oval and

grandstand remain, but the open land that was once used for car parking is now in the final stages of a 1500-home development by Mirvac.

“Setting up a practice in a grandstand has been an interesting adventure,” said Dr Iyer, “and came about out of sheer necessity. When I graduated from Melbourne University in 1992, I worked at the Alfred Hospital in their residency program and as an associate dentist in a private practice for the first few years of my career. I then opened my own practice in old premises that had been used as a dental surgery before, but had been closed for some three

years. It was in nearby North Dandenong and needed renovation, but I didn’t want to commit to that unless I owned the premises and the owner didn’t want to sell.

“So my husband and I started what turned out to be a very long process of trying to find somewhere in the area to purchase. We literally looked around for years; the Monash Council is very strict and it’s hard to find premises zoned for medical use.

“When they released the land around the Stadium, we tried to buy a block for commercial use to build a new practice, but the only commercially-zoned land in the development was within the



old grandstand and there was just one space set aside for medical use. Initially they wanted us to rent it but eventually we were able to buy.”

The space Dr Iyer purchased for what would become Grandstand Dental Care consisted of just a concrete block as a foundation and a concrete roof, with open sides at the back of the old grandstand. Immediately, she knew she would need plenty of help to turn her dream of an ideal working environment into reality.







“By the time we purchased the site for the new practice, we were at the end of our tether. We’d looked at every angle of how to buy or build a new practice in the area and we really had to stretch our imagination to see how it would work in this very unique location.

“I could see we would need specialist expertise and I ended up contacting Paul Grossi to design the practice and manage the construction process. I’d seen a practice they’d built in *Australasian Dental Practice* for Dr Rudi Linker, so I spoke to him and he praised their work. I then asked Paul Grossi to come and look at our site.

“Paul was very enthusiastic and thought it was a fantastic opportunity because it was so unique. My brief was that I wanted a very open feel and I didn’t want it to look like a dental surgery. I wanted it to look more like a day spa and I wanted the fixtures and fittings to have an upmarket look.”

Paul set about achieving maximum square footage which included installing a mezzanine level to take advantage of the height the space offered.

The final design includes a large reception and waiting area, two treatment rooms, a sterilisation area, an office for Dr Iyer, a patient WC, an OPG room and a spare consulting room on the ground floor. On the mezzanine level, there is a staff room and WC, a third treatment room and what was originally destined to be two more treatment rooms has now been leased to a dental laboratory.

“One of the reasons I went with Paul was that he was able to extract the most from the space. In particular, they excelled with the design of the mezzanine level. I had another dental design company look at the project as well and they were only able to get half the usable space. Paul was very smart in how he approached dealing with the structural constraints such as pillars and other obstructions and made features of them to get the best possible result.

“Paul was a true professional throughout and was able to get all the planning approvals we required and work with both Mirvac who were building the new housing estate and the original builders of the stadium years ago to ensure everything went smoothly with construction.





## Summary

### The Practice

Principal	Dr Devika Iyer
Type of Practice	General
Location	Mulgrave, Melbourne, Victoria
Size	190 square metres
No of chairs	2 + 1

### Equipment

Dental Units	Sirona C2+ with Sivision Patient Communication System
Autoclaves	DAC Universal, Siltex
X-ray	Sirona Heliodont DS and Sidexis Digital Intra Oral
OPG	Vatech E-Woo PaX-P&P
Compressor	Broadbent
Suction	Cattani
Software	Oasis

"The design has given me so many options. I now have an associate dentist working for me and upstairs, two of the spare rooms are now being leased by a dental technician. One of the rooms downstairs that couldn't be plumbed for a dental unit because of electrical cabling below in the slab is now being leased by a physiotherapist. So financially, we are maximising every aspect of the new premises.

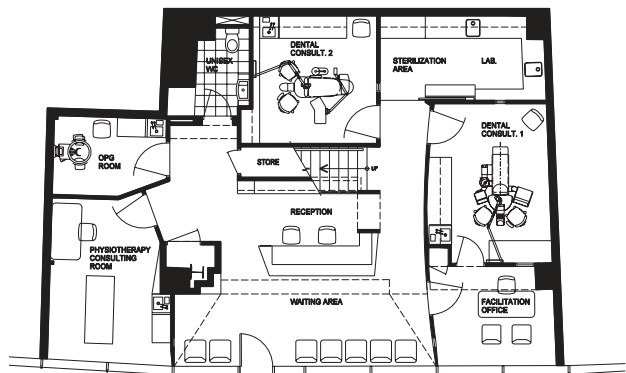
"Our patients love it too! 99% followed us from the old practice and we've had a lot of interest from new patients since we moved in as well. We are also getting a lot more word of mouth referrals and even business from the internet.

"It's worked out so much better than I ever thought it would. While it's all going on, all you think about is the cost but in hindsight, I'm glad I just went for it. If I had of compromised on anything, I would be regretting it now. It was a bit of a gamble, but it has well and truly paid off.

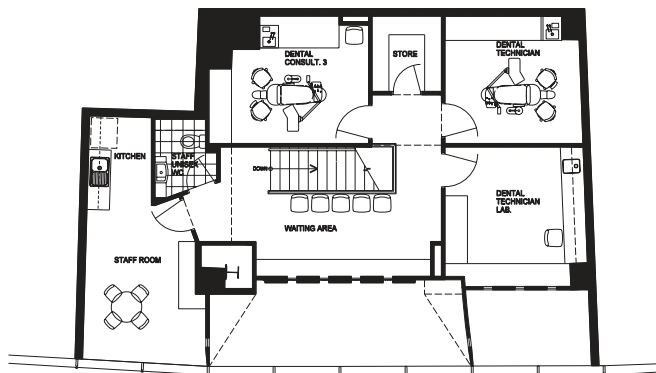
"The Sirona equipment I chose is the best and I researched everything carefully. The Sirona C2+ dental unit was superior to anything else I saw and I would have regretted buying a cheap chair. Sirona also had all the backup and support and were very approachable. If there is ever a problem, they are here within two hours to fix it. They have been excellent!

"Overall however, moving to this new location has made us feel a part of the community. All the businesses within the grandstand - a gym; café; fish and chip shop; a food market; and the Hawthorn Football Club - as well the wider community all look out for each other and it's a village atmosphere.

"Plus, my family and I are diehard Hawthorn fans. Not only do we get to see the team train in the football season, I am now the official club dentist, enabling me to treat and get to know the club and all the players, which really is a dream come true!"



Ground Floor Plan



First Floor Plan