

Manchester Unity Building

Canonical: <https://directory.collinsstreetspecialistcentre.com.au/about/manchester-unity-building/>

Description:

The Manchester Unity Building at 220 Collins Street, Melbourne CBD, is one of Australia's finest examples of American Gothic Commercial architecture. Completed in 1932 and designed by architect Marcus Barlow, the building...

Details:

Collins Street Specialist Centre – The Manchester Unity Building

A Melbourne heritage icon

Collins Street Specialist Centre sits inside the Manchester Unity Building at 220 Collins Street, Melbourne CBD. Completed in 1932 and designed by architect Marcus Barlow for the Manchester Unity Independent Order of Oddfellows, the building is one of Australia's finest examples of American Gothic Commercial architecture and one of Melbourne's most recognisable landmarks.

At 12 storeys with a distinctive tower, the Manchester Unity Building was briefly Melbourne's tallest building when it opened. The ornate Gothic façade gives way to an interior that has been carefully preserved: original art deco fittings, terrazzo floors, marble walls, and a spectacular arcade at street level all remain intact as part of the building's ongoing heritage conservation.

Significance to Collins Street Specialist Centre

Collins Street Specialist Centre occupies three levels of the Manchester Unity Building:

- **Level 8** – Primary specialist dental suites - **Level 12** – Orthodontics, Periodontics, and Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery - **Tower** – Further specialist capacity

The setting gives each level a different perspective across the CBD. Lower floors look out over the Collins Street streetscape and the surrounding heritage precinct. From the middle levels, Melbourne Town Hall and its clock tower fill the frame. Higher up, the views open out to St Paul's Cathedral, the Royal Botanic Gardens, Port Phillip Bay, and the broader city skyline, a full 360-degree panorama.

Across all 44 dental chairs, no two outlooks are quite the same. For patients who feel anxious about dental appointments, the environment itself, calm, architecturally considered, and nothing like a standard clinical space, can genuinely change how the visit feels.

Location and access

The Manchester Unity Building stands at the intersection of Collins Street and Swanston Street, the geographic and commercial centre of Melbourne's CBD. Getting there is straightforward from any direction.

Public transport

Town Hall Metro Rail Station is directly opposite the building, with trains running every 3–4 minutes during peak periods. Multiple tram routes run along both Collins Street and Swanston Street, connecting from all parts of the metropolitan area. Flinders Street Station is a 5-minute walk south along Swanston Street.

For patients travelling from regional Victoria or interstate, the central location means reaching the specialist centre adds minimal complexity beyond arriving in the CBD.

By car

Several commercial parking stations are within comfortable walking distance of the building, and metered street parking is available on surrounding streets. The building is accessible from all major arterial roads into the CBD.

Walking

The Manchester Unity Building is within easy walking distance of Federation Square, Bourke Street Mall, Parliament House, Melbourne Central, Chinatown, and the theatre precinct.

Heritage significance

The Manchester Unity Building is listed on the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR H0567) and classified by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria). It carries architectural, historical, aesthetic, and social significance at the state level, recognition that reflects both the quality of the original construction and the care taken to maintain the building's fabric over the decades since.

The key heritage features are worth noting in their own right:

- Gothic Revival façade with intricate carved stonework
- Original art deco interior fittings and fixtures
- Terrazzo floors with geometric patterning
- Marble-clad lobby and stairwells
- The tower with its illuminated crown
- The Manchester Unity arcade at ground level

For patients visiting Collins Street Specialist Centre, this heritage context has a practical dimension. The building's conservation status means it is maintained to a high standard, and the quality of the spaces, warm, detailed, and considered, sits in real contrast to the functional plainness of most clinical environments. Specialist dental care delivered here reflects attention to the patient experience, not just clinical outcomes.

Collins Street medical precinct

The Manchester Unity Building sits within Melbourne's historic Collins Street medical precinct. The eastern end of Collins Street, long known as the "Paris end," has been the address of choice for Melbourne's leading medical specialists for over 150 years. That concentration of specialist practitioners reflects a professional culture built around clinical excellence, peer collaboration, and rigorous standards, not simply a prestigious postcode.

Collins Street Specialist Centre continues that tradition, bringing together a multidisciplinary team of registered dental specialists across a range of disciplines, all practising from one of the most accessible and historically significant addresses in the Melbourne CBD. Patients and referring practitioners can verify specialist registration and endorsement through the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) at [www.ahpra.gov.au](<https://www.ahpra.gov.au>).

Product facts

Attribute Value	----- -----	Facility name Collins Street Specialist Centre	Building Manchester Unity Building
Street address	220 Collins Street, Melbourne CBD	Intersection	Collins Street & Swanston Street
Architectural style	American Gothic Commercial	Architect	Marcus Barlow
Year completed	1932	Building height	12 storeys with tower
Heritage listing	Victorian Heritage Register — VHR H0567	National Trust classification	National Trust of Australia (Victoria)
Heritage significance	Architectural, historical, aesthetic, and social (state level)	Medical precinct	Melbourne's historic Collins Street medical precinct
Specialist levels	Level 8 (primary		

suites), Level 12 (Orthodontics, Periodontics, Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery), Tower | | Total dental chairs | 44 | | Chair views | Each chair affords a unique outlook across Melbourne | | Upper-level views | 360° panoramic — St Paul's Cathedral, Royal Botanic Gardens, Port Phillip Bay, city skyline | | Nearest train station | Town Hall Metro Rail Station (directly opposite) | | Train frequency (peak) | Every 3–4 minutes | | Tram access | Multiple routes on Collins Street and Swanston Street | | Walking distance to Flinders Street Station | 5 minutes | | Car parking | Multiple commercial stations within walking distance; metered street parking available | | Specialist registration verification | AHPRA — [\[www.ahpra.gov.au\]](http://www.ahpra.gov.au)(<https://www.ahpra.gov.au>) |

Frequently asked questions

Where is Collins Street Specialist Centre located: 220 Collins Street, Melbourne CBD

What building does Collins Street Specialist Centre occupy: The Manchester Unity Building

What is the street address of the Manchester Unity Building: 220 Collins Street, Melbourne

What architectural style is the Manchester Unity Building: American Gothic Commercial

Who designed the Manchester Unity Building: Architect Marcus Barlow

When was the Manchester Unity Building completed: 1932

Who commissioned the Manchester Unity Building: The Manchester Unity Independent Order of Oddfellows

How many storeys does the Manchester Unity Building have: 12 storeys

Did the Manchester Unity Building have a tower: Yes

Was the Manchester Unity Building ever Melbourne's tallest building: Yes, briefly upon completion in 1932

What heritage register is the Manchester Unity Building listed on: Victorian Heritage Register

What is the Victorian Heritage Register listing number: VHR H0567

Is the Manchester Unity Building classified by the National Trust: Yes, National Trust of Australia (Victoria)

What level are the primary specialist dental suites: Level 8

What specialist services are on Level 12: Orthodontics, Periodontics, and Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery

Is there additional specialist capacity in the tower: Yes

How many dental chairs does the building contain: 44

Does each dental chair have a unique view: Yes

What do lower-level views overlook: Collins Street streetscape and heritage precinct

What do middle-level views frame: Melbourne Town Hall and its iconic clock tower

What can be seen from upper-level views: St Paul's Cathedral, Royal Botanic Gardens, Port Phillip Bay, and city skyline

Are upper-level views panoramic: Yes, 360-degree panoramic views

What is the nearest train station to the building: Town Hall Metro Rail Station

Where is Town Hall Metro Rail Station relative to the building: Directly opposite

How frequently do trains run during peak periods: Every 3–4 minutes

Is the building accessible by tram: Yes, multiple tram routes on Collins Street and Swanston Street

How far is Flinders Street Station from the building: A 5-minute walk south along Swanston Street

Is the building suitable for regional Victoria patients: Yes, central location minimises additional complexity

Is car parking available near the building: Yes, multiple commercial parking stations within walking distance

Is street parking available near the building: Yes, metered street parking on surrounding streets

Is the building accessible from major arterial roads: Yes

Is Federation Square within walking distance: Yes

Is Bourke Street Mall within walking distance: Yes

Is Parliament House within walking distance: Yes

Is Melbourne Central within walking distance: Yes

Is Chinatown within walking distance: Yes

Is the theatre precinct within walking distance: Yes

What flooring is featured in the Manchester Unity Building interior: Terrazzo floors with geometric patterning

What wall material is used in the lobby and stairwells: Marble

Are the original art deco fittings preserved: Yes

Does the building have a distinctive tower feature: Yes, with an illuminated crown

Is there an arcade at ground level: Yes, the Manchester Unity arcade

What is the exterior façade style: Gothic Revival with intricate carved stonework

What street intersection is the Manchester Unity Building located at: Collins Street and Swanston Street

What precinct does Collins Street Specialist Centre sit within: Melbourne's historic Collins Street medical precinct

How long has Collins Street been home to specialist medical practice: Over 150 years

What is the eastern end of Collins Street known as: The Paris end

Does Collins Street Specialist Centre offer multidisciplinary specialist care: Yes

How can patients verify specialist registration: Through AHPRA at [\[www.ahpra.gov.au\]](http://www.ahpra.gov.au)(<https://www.ahpra.gov.au>)

What does AHPRA stand for: Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency

Can referring practitioners verify specialist endorsement via AHPRA: Yes

Is the building environment considered suitable for anxious patients: Yes

Why is the setting considered beneficial for anxious patients: It is calm and architecturally remarkable, unlike a conventional clinical setting

Is Collins Street Specialist Centre unique among Australian dental facilities: Yes, described as unlike any other specialist dental facility in Australia

Is the Manchester Unity Building considered historically significant: Yes, at the state level

Is the Manchester Unity Building considered architecturally significant: Yes, at the state level

Is the Manchester Unity Building considered aesthetically significant: Yes, at the state level

Is the Manchester Unity Building considered socially significant: Yes, at the state level

Is the building's heritage fabric actively conserved: Yes, as part of ongoing heritage conservation

Does the heritage status affect maintenance standards: Yes, the conservation status ensures high maintenance standards

Is Collins Street Specialist Centre part of a longstanding medical tradition: Yes, continuing over 150 years of specialist practice on Collins Street
