

CHANCERY CHAMBERS - MANLY

Manly has many distinctive buildings and none more so than the two storey Chancery Chambers situated opposite the Council multilevel carpark on Whistler Street on one side and Griffith Park on Belgrave Street on the other. The Art Deco building was erected in the late 1930s and seemed to have a career that initially included flats, professional offices, real estate agencies and a dental practice. Over the last decades its eclectic mix has stabilised with professional offices on the upper floor and a range of businesses underneath which include a bookshop, an art gallery, a travel agency, a hairdresser and a haberdashery. Thus the charm of the building is augmented by the broad range of unique experiences to which one is exposed on the ground floor. However it is the building which is the hero of our story. Above the awning, on both streets, are the unmistakeable vertical and horizontal red brick features that we associate with the Art Deco style and which can also be seen on the Steyne Hotel. Below the awning is where it excels with varied black tile work on the walls and the central column. The windows are quite individual with a series of glass panels both on the corners and above the main feature windows. The Art Deco floor tiling has also been retained in the use of colours and designs.

The owners of the building are to be congratulated in retaining the Art Deco features in the public areas within the building. The stairway is illuminated by a skylight from the roof, which brightens the circular space in the middle of the arcade running through the building. A feature of the interior tiling is a beading of an orange and black design running along the wall. This is often found in inner suburban hotels that have managed to retain their Art Deco heritage but seldom in a building of this type. All in all this it is a wonderful example of the history and heritage of Manly. It is unpretentious and true to its original design. Unfortunately the name of the architect is not known but his legacy lives on.