

Building:	Former Free Medical Mission Dispensary	Significance:	A
Address:	162 Wellington Street, Collingwood	Melway Map Ref:	2C E9
Building Type:	Medical Centre	Construction Date:	1889
Architect:	John Frederick Gibbins	Builder:	Unknown



Intactness:		Condition:	
G[] F[x] P[]		G[x] F[] P[]	
Existing Heritage Listings:		Recommended Heritage Listings:	
Victorian Heritage Register	[x]	Victorian Heritage Register	[x]
Register of the National Estate	[x]	Register of the National Estate	[x]
National Trust	[x]	Heritage Overlay Controls	[x]

History

In January 1869, Dr Singleton opened his dispensary on the site of the present building. He built a mission hall at the rear which was used also by the Salvation Army. Singleton established other charitable centres in Collingwood, including his night shelter for destitute women in Islington Street, and a refuge for fallen women in Oxford Street. In 1878, the Wellington Street dispensary attended to 7,176 applications for medical treatment of which 3,468 were children. It undertook 300 home visitations in that year, and was funded, amongst others, by the Ladies' College, East Melbourne and the Collingwood City Council.

Singleton advocated the non-alcoholic principle of treatment and ran Bible classes, evangelistic services in the Mission Hall, a children's church and afternoon Sunday School. By 1882, significant contributors to the dispensary also included the Metropolitan Gas Company, Messrs Felton and Grimwade, and Beath Schiess and Co, whose buildings remain in Sackville Street. 8,389 applications for treatment were received in the year.

On 22 June 1887 the foundation stone of the present building was laid and it was officially opened on 31 January 1889. By 1892 in the year of its founder's death, the dispensary received 13,422 applications for treatment.

The centre was later known as Dr Singleton's Dispensary and Welfare Centre, and by 1977 it was in use as the City of Collingwood Health Centre.

Andrew Ward. *Collingwood Conservation Study*. 1995.

Description

The former Free Medical Mission Dispensary is a double-storey building of rendered masonry construction, designed in an Italianate style. The facade is composed of superimposed orders, with rendered panelled pilasters dividing the facade into five bays, and with classical entablatures at each level. The first floor cornice is modillioned and dentilated, and is surmounted by a balustraded parapet. Windows are semi-circular arched double-hung sashes grouped in pairs, and have moulded archivolt and keystones. The central bay projects slightly, and has a consoled pediment at ground floor. Beneath this is a large semi-circular arched window, presumably originally the entrance, which is presently located further to the north. The first floor window above the pediment has been infilled. The southern-most bay contains an arched opening with a pair of ornate iron gates, bearing John's Singleton's initials and coat of arms. Chimneys are rendered, with moulded caps.¹

Comparative Examples

Russian House, 287 Gore Street, Fitzroy

Significance

The former Free Medical Mission Dispensary is of considerable social and historical significance. The building demonstrates the work undertaken by churches and charitable institutions in the 19th century, prior to the assumption of the welfare responsibilities by the State. It is an important monument to Dr John Singleton, one of Collingwood's most noteworthy reformers. The building is also associated with the commencement of the Salvation Army in Collingwood.

The building is also of local architectural significance. The building is a typical and relatively intact example of the 19th century Italianate Renaissance style, and is an important element in the Wellington Street streetscape.

Original Source

Andrew Ward. *Collingwood Conservation Study*. 1995.

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- 1 National Trust file. Free Medical Mission Dispensary Annual Reports. Australian Building and Construction News, 14 March 1891, p. 187. State Library H35761, H35762.