



REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES- ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE.

The criteria adopted by the Heritage Council in September, 1991 have been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place.

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE.

The remnant group of buildings on the Swanbourne Hospital site are typical of early twentieth century institutional buildings. Their formal planning and design with an emphasis on rectangular forms and Georgian detailing, create the impression of austerity and strength which is enhanced by their prominent location on the crest of the hill.

The aesthetic value of the place derives from the formal planning of the buildings as the original core of a once larger group of hospital facilities. The symmetrical facade of the Administration Block with its classically proportioned stone portico and formal driveway with circular garden area in front, provides a focus to the group. By contrast the west elevation of the Dining and Recreation Hall (Montgomery Hall) provides an appropriate elevation to the complex, visually enclosing the group of buildings. (Criteria 1.4)

The planning of the complex and design of the buildings in the early years of the twentieth century reflected the current thinking on hospital layout and was based on research into asylum design in the U.K. and the eastern states. (Criterion 1.2)

The remaining group of buildings and mature trees located on the crest of the hill overlooking John XXIII College and the residential subdivision that has developed on the original Claremont Mental Hospital site, provide a focus and prominent landmark to the area. Mature trees both indigenous and introduced, originally part of the hospital site and including pines that lined the entrance drive to the hospital - provide a significant entrance statement to the site. (Criterion 1.3)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

Historically the remnant buildings on the Swanbourne Hospital site are representative of the wider site once occupied by the Claremont Hospital for the Insane. The site included an intensely developed area in the immediate vicinity of the remnant group, another group of buildings now within the boundary of the Graylands Hospital site and various other

buildings and site features in the original site area. The whole area was planned to be largely self supporting with a dairy farm, bakery, laundry, and other service buildings. The site also provided accommodation for staff ranging from hostel style accommodation for male and female attendants to houses for the superintendent and senior medical officers.

The site also contained a mortuary. The remaining buildings provide historic reference to the range of human activities previously carried out in the area. (Criterion 2.1)

The Claremont Mental Hospital is historically significant as a phase in the history of the treatment of the mentally ill in the State. The Claremont Mental Hospital was constructed as a replacement after the Fremantle Lunatic Asylum was proved to be inadequate. The construction of Heathcote Hospital in the 1920s provided a later phase of development. (Criterion 2.1)

The Claremont Mental Hospital was once occupied by more by more than one thousand patients accommodated in segregated wards according to gender and type of mental illness. The site represents a phase in the history of the State when the mentally ill were institutionalised away from the general community. (Criterion 2.2)

The place is significant for association with a number of prominent individuals. These include Dr. S.H.R. Montgomery who was appointed as Superintendent of the Fremantle Lunatic Asylum in 1901 and charged with the task of establishing the new Hospital for the mentally ill. Montgomery was involved with the site selection, planning and establishment of the hospital on the Claremont site.

J.H. Grainger the principal architect with the P.W.D. was also associated with the establishment of the hospital and the design of early buildings. After 1905 Grainger was replaced by Hillson Beasley who was responsible for later buildings and site development.

Other medical officers and individuals were involved with the care and treatment of the mentally ill over the period of the Hospital's development. Their contribution forms part of the social history of the hospital. (Criterion 2.3)

The remnant buildings represent fine examples of P.W.D. design typical of the early years of the twentieth century. They are representative of the level of technological knowledge in the State at this period, which had been enhanced by the influx of expertise resulting from increase in population including skilled architects, engineers and tradesmen during the gold rush period of the 1890s. (Criterion 2.4)

11.3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

The remnant Swanbourne Hospital site provides potential to yield information about the accommodation of people diagnosed as being mentally ill. This value is reduced by the demolition of associated buildings and reduction of the site. The surrounding site and remaining buildings provide opportunity for archaeological investigation, although previous site disturbance has reduced this value. (Criterion 3.2)

11.4. SOCIAL VALUE

The Swanbourne Hospital has associations with all those involved with the care and treatment of the mentally ill in the State, through education, nursing, various therapies, domestic services and other occupations previously represented on the site. The place is of particular significance not only to those who worked there but also to others in the field of medical treatment. (Criterion 4.1)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12.1. RARITY

The Swanbourne Hospital site represents a remnant of the original Claremont Hospital for the Insane. The hospital was the major state administered mental institution in Western Australia from its inception in 1904 to its closure in the 1980s. It represented a period in the history of mental illness when large numbers of patients were segregated from the main community. A method of treatment no longer practised. (Criterion 5.2)

12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

The Swanbourne Hospital represents a phase in the treatment of the mentally ill in the state and is representative of large government institutions constructed in the early years of the twentieth century.

The hospital represents the transition from Fremantle Asylum, where patients were treated almost as prisoners, to the more open approach adapted in the 1920s at Heathcote.

Other government institutions constructed at the period include Wooroloo Isolation Hospital. (Criterion 6.2)

12.3 CONDITION

The Significance of the Swanbourne Hospital site is reduced by the fact that the existing site represents only a remnant of the original Claremont Hospital complex and wider site. In particular the demolition of associated ward blocks and removal of site features including covered ways have reduced the authenticity of the site.

The remaining individual buildings however retain a high degree of authenticity. Only the kitchen has been significantly altered since the construction of the buildings in 1904. There are various accretions including ducts and toilet blocks which reduce the authenticity of the whole site but these can be easily removed. The external area to the east of the Administration block retains its original form and layout.

The condition of the remnant buildings is generally good although there is some deterioration due in part to vandalism. The major effect of vandalism has been the loss of the main staircase balustrade in the Administration building and Female Attendants' Block. Numerous rooms in all buildings have had their joinery removed and there is a general need for conservation work. There are problems of damp and white ant damage all requiring remedial work. In general however, the condition of the buildings does not affect the assessed significance.

The integrity of the place relates to the long term sustainability of the assessed significance. The remaining buildings provide opportunities for re-use within which heritage values may be retained.

12.4 INTEGRITY

The remaining buildings have been unoccupied for several years. The patients are long gone, hospital fixtures and fittings have been removed and the future uses of the place remains uncertain. The integrity of the place is diminished.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

Vandals have stripped the buildings of many interior fixtures and fittings and this has diminished the authenticity of the place. However, enough of the fabric survives to enable the restoration of much of the place.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

The Swanbourne Hospital site contains the Administration Block, Montgomery Hall, Male Attendants Block, Female Attendants Block, Kitchen and Store. These are the remaining buildings from the original Claremont Hospital for the Insane constructed on the site in 1904 as the state's major institution for the care of the mentally ill.

Care of the mentally ill in Western Australia began officially with the transfer of ten convicts to the Fremantle Lunatic Asylum (now the Fremantle Arts Centre), which was completed and occupied in July 1865. In July 1897, Whitby Falls Mental Hospital opened as an annexe to the Fremantle Asylum. Patients transferred there were categorised as those who were capable of performing useful work, typically farming, and who could be trusted with a certain amount of freedom.¹

¹ West Australian Archive notes AN200

In 1900 a parliamentary committee was formed to inquire into the asylums at Fremantle and at Whitby Falls found that Fremantle Asylum was utterly unfit for the purpose for which it was used and its continued occupancy as an asylum was likely to retard if not altogether prevent the cure of the patients. The management structure of the institution showed serious defects and the place was virtually a prison. The committee made the recommendation that Fremantle Asylum be abolished and that a new site be found accessible to both Perth and Fremantle. It also recommended that a large proportion of the staff should be experienced in the management of the insane and that a resident medical officer to attend solely to the insane be appointed to Fremantle.

In April 1901 after consultation with H.C. Manning, the recently retired Inspector General of the insane in N.S.W. and the lunacy commissioners in London, the State government appointed Dr. S.H.R. Montgomery as Superintendent of the Fremantle Lunatic Asylum. Montgomery was previously the assistant medical officer at Nottingham City Asylum in the U.K. and had some knowledge of the principles of asylum design.

In 1901 Montgomery and the Principal Architect of the P.W.D., J.A. Grainger, travelled to the Eastern States to investigate the various Lunacy Acts and the design of asylums. On his return to W.A. Montgomery was instructed to establish a committee to select a site for the new asylum. On Montgomery's recommendation a site was chosen at Claremont, accessible to the centres of population at Perth and Fremantle. Amongst the reasons given for the choice of location were ease of visiting, lower construction and operating costs, ease of providing entertainment, proximity to medical help and ease of obtaining staff. The site consisted of 394.5 acres (160 hectares) and had its own artesian water supply which facilitated the setting up of farms to assist with the upkeep of the institution.² Government Reserve H8636 at Claremont was set aside for the new asylum on 27 February 1903.

By 1904 documents for site development and construction of buildings were in the process of preparation by the Public Works Department. Initial site plans indicated the location of key buildings along the ridge on the western side of the site. Ward buildings were designed in a linear manner to form a crescent extending to north and south of the central core of administrative buildings. The central core included the administration block, main store, kitchen, male and female attendants quarters and the dining and recreation hall. The wards for female patients extended to the north and for male patients to the south of the central core. Wards were provided for different categories of patients in order from the centre: Quiet and Chronic, Recent and Acute, Sick and Infirm, Epileptic and Violent and Noisy.

² Best, Patricia A *Thesis on the History of the Claremont Mental Hospital*, unpublished 1956. Battye Library Collection.

Ward blocks were named according to locations around Perth and Fremantle. In 1904 all the male wards were under construction, but the female wards were constructed over a more extended period, with the violent and noisy female ward not being constructed until 1933. The ward blocks were connected with each other and with the central core buildings by means of covered ways located on the eastern side of the blocks. To the north east of the central core buildings were the hospital's service buildings including the boiler house and laundry.

The original site plan also indicated the establishment of a farm dairy to the north east of the main buildings. A house for the R.M.O. was located to the south east of the main block, and a mortuary on the southern boundary of the site. There was also a small ward for patients suffering infectious diseases to the east of the main buildings.

Some original drawings for the site are signed by the Principal Architect of the P.W.D. J.A. Grainger. Some are signed by Hillson Beasley who became Chief Architect in 1905. All of the early buildings were of an architecturally distinctive style. The majority were two storey with walls a combination of brick and limestone. Architectural drawings and photographic evidence indicate buildings with formal proportions and detailing including double hung sash windows with small panes of glass, rectangular forms and steeply pitched, hipped roofs with half timbered roof gables. A number of roofs had distinctive ventilation turrets and chimneys with rendered corbelling and bands of stone and brickwork.

Buildings generally were constructed with concrete strip footings and timber floors, although granolithic floors were laid in kitchens and service areas, including the basement to the dining and recreation hall. Cavity walls were used generally with buildings typically constructed with an outer wall of brick or limestone and an inner wall of brick. This form of construction was typical of Public Works Department detailing current at this period. The buildings had timber joinery typical of the period including panelled doors, moulded skirtings and architraves. Roofs of most of the buildings were distinctive dark grey slate which was later replaced by clay tiles.

The siting and massing of the buildings is significant. The main administrative buildings were located on the highest point of the site and wards located with an east-west orientation along the crest of the hill. At this period, the concept of solar orientation of buildings with a north-south focus was not common practice. Problems of sanitation, health and hygiene however suggest an emphasis on fresh air and natural ventilation in buildings and hence the prominent and exposed location.

The original group of hospital buildings formed a high density development, leaving a large area of the site undeveloped. This combined with the formal architecture of the buildings tended to give an institutional quality to the development in stark contrast to the largely undeveloped rural setting. Photographic evidence indicates unmade roads, timber post and rail fences and little planting adjacent to buildings.

In 1912 the Female Attendants Block was extended and alterations made to the first floor of the building. In 1922, a large annexe was constructed on land to the north of the Female Attendants Block, providing additional accommodation for nurses. This building was constructed on land previously used for gardens and a tennis court and was linked to the Female Attendants' Block by means of a covered way. The style of the building was similar to the style of the Female Attendants' Block built in 1904.

In the 1920s a bio box (for film projection) was constructed on the northern end of Montgomery Hall and a screen erected in front of the proscenium so that the building could be used as a picture theatre to entertain both patients and staff. Throughout the history of the site, this building was used as a dining hall and a recreational space for patients.

In 1954 an Occupational Therapy Building (now demolished) was constructed to the west of Montgomery Hall. In 1958 the kitchen was substantially remodelled internally and a new kitchen addition constructed in the original kitchen yard.

In 1975 the decision was taken to phase out the use of the Claremont Hospital for the Insane. At this period changing attitudes towards the mentally ill encouraged integration of patients back into the general community and the move towards disbanding large residential institutions. The proposal was to contract the requirements of the Mental Health Services onto the adjacent Graylands Hospital site covering approximately thirty hectares fronting Brockway Road.

The closure of the Claremont Hospital for the Insane led to the proposal to redevelop the major part of the hospital site. The Urban Lands Council was the statutory body responsible for assessing the site and determining appropriate future use. Thirty two hectares of land were transferred by the State Government for the development of John XXIII College and the bulk of the remainder subdivided for residential purposes. The majority of the buildings on the site were demolished but a remnant group including the Administration Block, Montgomery Hall, Male and Female Attendants Blocks, Store and Kitchen retained on a reduced site.

Summary of Original Documents

Original Documents are located at the BMA Plan Room under the reference 24/1/0.

The following are relevant to the remaining site:

Site Plans

Contour Plan of Reserve 1904 signed J.H. Grainger

General Plan of Site Showing Present Levels of Ground 1904 signed J.H. Grainger.

Administration Block

Drg. No.1 Plans and Sections 1904 signed J.H. Grainger

Drg. No.2 Roof and Foundations Plan 1904
Drg. No.3 Elevations 1904
Detail No.10 Roof over Covered Way to Administration Block 1905

Montgomery Hall

Drg. No.1 Foundations and Ground Floor Plans 1904 signed J.H. Grainger
Drg. No.2 Sections and Elevations 1904

Male Attendants Block

Drg. No.1 Elevations and Plan 1904 signed J.H. Grainger
Drg. No. 2 Roof and Foundation Plans and Sections 1904

Female Attendants Block

Drg. No.1 Elevations and Plan 1904 signed J.H. Grainger
Drg. No.2 Roof and Foundation Plans and Sections 1904.

Kitchen Block

Drg. No.1 Ground Plan 1904 signed J.H. Grainger
Drg. No.2 Roof Plan 1904
Drg. No.3 Sections 1904

Stores Section

Plans, Elevations, Sections 1903

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

The original site of the Claremont Hospital for the Insane has been significantly altered by the demolition of original buildings and redevelopment of parts of the site for new uses including John XXIII College and extensive residential subdivision. Numerous buildings and site features have been removed and the boundaries of the original site are no longer clearly distinguishable from the surrounding area.

The remaining Swanbourne Hospital site contains all that are left of the original group of buildings constructed on the Claremont Hospital for the Insane site in 1904. All the ward blocks, laundry and service buildings and associated site features and structures were demolished in the 1980s. The remaining site is cruciform in shape and retains a minimal amount of open space around the remaining buildings to provide a buffer from surrounding development and to allow for on site parking for future users of the site.

The remaining buildings are:-

- Administration Block 1904
- Montgomery Hall 1904
- Male Attendants Quarters 1904
- Female Attendants Quarters 1904 and 1912
- Kitchen 1904 and 1958
- Store 1904 and 1958

The site originally contained an annexe to the Female Attendants Quarters constructed in 1922 to the north of the remaining buildings and an occupational therapy building constructed in 1954 to the west of Montgomery Hall. Both of these buildings have subsequently been demolished.

Numerous site features including covered ways that originally linked the remnant buildings with the ward blocks have been demolished. However, the covered way between the Administration Block and the Store constructed in 1904 has been retained.

Also remaining is the entry driveway to the site including the forecourt to the Administration Block with its original circular driveway and circular grass plot. The service roads to the stores building and other parts of the site were altered in the 1950s when the extension to the Store building was constructed.

Limestone retaining walls which extend forming curved wings on either side of the Administration Building remain intact and together with the entry portico give a sense of formality and enclosure to the space in front of the Administration Building. Other retaining walls on the site including walls adjacent to Montgomery Hall, date from a later period and are not of heritage significance.

The site retains evidence of remnant vegetation including a large mature Port Jackson fig tree (*Eucalyptus Clodocalyx*) on the northern site of the Administration Building forecourt. Of particular significance is the remnant avenue of pines and other exotic species which lines the approach to the site along Heritage Lane. Although not part of the Swanbourne Hospital Conservation Area, this avenue is integral to the significance of the remnant group of buildings on the site.

The visual dominance of the site and the Administration Block in particular give the buildings a landmark quality in the area. The formal arrangement of the building group and their scale and proportions of individual structures reinforces this effect.

Administration Block

The Administration Block was constructed in 1904 as part of the Claremont Hospital for the Insane to the drawings prepared by the Public Works Department. The building has a formal grandeur which distinguishes it from the other remaining buildings on the site.

The building is two storeys in height and rectangular in plan. The site was excavated prior to construction and the building built into the hill on the western side. The front elevation incorporates bay windows on either side and a central Donnybrook stone portico and a roof gable defining the entry. The long axis of the plan is oriented north-south with the entry portico facing east. Curved limestone retaining walls extending from both ends of the building support access roads to the rear area. The building is connected to the adjacent stores building on the western side by a covered way. There are two lightwells in the western elevation which extend down to the lower floor providing light and ventilation to the rooms below.

Montgomery Hall

Montgomery Hall was constructed in 1904 as the main dining and recreation hall for the original hospital. It is located on the same axis as the Administration and Stores buildings. The hall is located on the western face of the ridge with levels falling approximately 2.5 m across the hall width. Access to Montgomery Hall was originally made from the covered way running north-south on the eastern side of the hall. The hall is a large rectangular space with high ceilings and engaged pier brick walls. The main hall is constructed over an under-croft with an arched limestone colonnade around the three exposed sides. This colonnade supports a verandah at the hall level which has been partially removed. A roof truss structure supports a hipped roof originally of slate and currently marseilles tiles with the two original pressed metal ventilation towers. These were a distinctive detail of many original hospital buildings.

The interior of the Hall is a large classically proportioned space with simple detailing and heavily beamed ceiling with large ceiling roses. There is a proscenium with raised and raked stage floor and 'fly' space at the southern end of the hall. The hall has high windows on the east and west facades giving the space ample light.

Male Attendants Block

The Male Attendants Block was one of the original buildings constructed in 1904 on the site and forms the south face of the remaining group of hospital buildings. The building is balanced by the Female Attendants building on the northern side about the east-west axis.

The building is basically rectangular in plan with three projecting bays on the south elevation. The style and materials of the building follow those of other buildings on the site.

The building provided accommodation for male staff working at the hospital and sitting rooms, recreation areas and offices on the ground floor sleeping and bathing facilities on the first floor.

Female Attendants Block

The Female Attendants Block was one of the original buildings constructed in 1904 and forms the north face of the group of remaining buildings. The building is balanced by the Male Attendants Building on the southern side about the east-west axis of the remaining group.

The building mirrors the Male Attendants Building on the south and is basically rectangular in plan with three projecting bays on the north elevation. However, it varies from the Male Attendants block as the whole of the block is a two storey structure. The style and materials of the building follow those of other buildings in the group. In 1912 the building was extended at first floor level.

The building provided accommodation for female staff working at the hospital and provided sitting rooms, recreation areas and offices on the ground floor with sleeping and bathing facilities on the first floor.

Kitchen Block

The Kitchen block is located between the Male Attendants and Female Attendants buildings and to the east of Montgomery Hall. The building originally opened on the eastern side to an open, flat paved courtyard with central storage buildings linked to it by a covered way. The kitchen block formed part of the original building contract. A distinctive feature of the original building were the high clerestory roofs over both main kitchen and scullery areas.

In 1958 part of the original fabric was demolished and a new kitchen wing constructed in the eastern courtyard area.

Stores Building

The Stores building was one of the original buildings constructed on the site in 1904 and is located directly behind the Administration Block and connected to this building by an open ended, truss roofed covered area constructed in 1906. The building maintained its original use throughout the history of the hospital and remained substantially as originally built until 1960.

The building is rectangular in shape with the long axis oriented north-south, parallel to the Administration Block. It has an open internal space with a room at each end. The roof is a simple hipped form with the roof extending over verandahs around all four sides. This is the only building in the group that originally had a corrugated iron roof and retains this material currently.

The alterations and additions in 1960 involved underpinning the west side of the original building to lower the ground level to match the Kitchen Block. This was associated with changes in level and underpinning the eastern end of both Male and Female Attendants blocks to facilitate vehicular access to the Kitchen courtyard. Stairs and ramps were added to the western wall of the stores building at this time. The hipped roof was also extended south and a new store and lavatory block added. This block maintained the form and opening sizes of the original building.

13.3 REFERENCES

Heritage and Conservation Professionals: *Conservation Plan for Swanbourne Hospital, Formerly Claremont Hospital for the Insane Heritage Lane, Mount Claremont, W.A.* Prepared for Building Management Authority. 1994.